

A NOVELTY IN WINTER GAMES ON THE ICE!

# FRANK MANLEY'S WEEKLY OF YOUNG ATHLETES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1906 by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

No. 22.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 2, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

## FRANK MANLEY'S NEW GAME;

### OR, THE HURDLE RACE ON SKATES.

By "PHYSICAL DIRECTOR."



At the first hurdle the onlookers uproariously greeted the new sport. "If the crowd but knew that this race means not a mere victory, but a life!" groaned Frank, despairingly.



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# Frank Manley's Weekly

## GOOD STORIES OF YOUNG ATHLETES

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE TROUBLE TRIO UNGLOVES THE HAND OF DEATH.

"It looks bloodthirsty, all right," declared Dick Foster, seriously.

"And you've a raft of mean enemies, you know," added George Lucas, soberly.

"Why, it's plain enough, what there is of it," said Cranston, earnestly. "As soon as I saw it I knew I had stumbled on something that needed looking into."

"So it would seem," mused Frank Manley, again picking up the scrap of paper that had absorbed the attention of all.

"I found it blowing about in the street, right close to our athletic field. I don't know what made me bend over to pick up that bit of paper, but now I'm mighty glad I did."

"So am I," smiled Frank, though his face was serious. There was little enough on the paper. It was a small fragment torn out of a letter. The writing was cramped and crabbed, yet it looked like the penmanship of an educated man.

First of all, to attract notice on this torn fragment of paper, were the letters that plainly spelled:

"Kill Manle"

That was all, but little imagination was needed to add a "y" to the second word.

On the other side of the sheet were the words:

"Must be done——"

And, right below this was:

"Meet me at Br——"

That was all that was visible on that line, but right below was the single complete word:

"Monday."

"It's a puzzle," muttered Frank.

He left his seat at the big table and began to walk up and down the board-room of the gymnasium of the Woodstock Junior Athletic Club, of which he was captain.

"It's a puzzle," repeated Manley, as if talking to himself.

"It ain't much of a puzzle," broke in Dick Foster. "It's plain enough that some one is talking of killing you."



Cranston and Lucas nodded their heads vigorously.

Frank laughed.

"You three boys are rightly named the 'Trouble Trio,'" he went on. "You scent trouble in every breath of the wind."

"Breath of wind?" sniffed Foster. "I call this a gale!"

"But the great trouble is," added Cranston, "that we can't even guess from which quarter this gale is blowing."

"Some one wants to kill you," cried Lucas. "That's enough to start on. We've got to find out who that some one is."

"But who should want to kill me, and why?" persisted Manley.

"There was Gabe Eastman, that half-breed, who tried hard enough to do it last week. There is Indian blood in him, and he wouldn't stop at anything for revenge."

"He didn't stop at anything," corrected Frank. "But we happen to know where he is. In this cold weather he is keeping nice and warm behind bars."

"But it's likely enough that he has relatives," put in Dick Foster. "They must have Indian blood, too. Isn't it likely that some of Eastman's relatives—half-breed Indians, of course—are plotting to kill you in revenge for the many years that Gabe Eastman will have to spend behind bars?"

"And they have the money to do it with, too," broke in Lucas. "Gabe Eastman wasn't cleaned out of his fortune by a long shot. He could turn over thousands and thousands of dollars to pay for having you killed. Frank, you'll find, sure enough, that that's where the danger blows from. Eastman's relatives or friends have gotten together, and they mean to do you up to a finish—the trick that Gabe himself failed in."

"I wonder if you're right," mused Frank.

"Right?" echoed Foster. "Of course we are! Frank, we've accidentally ungloved the hand of death. That hand is pointing at you, and we know who is behind the hand."

"What are you fellows looking so mighty serious over?" demanded a jovial voice, as the door of the board-room was hastily pulled open.

In stamped Hal Spofford, followed by Joe Prescott. They were, respectively, the first and second lieutenants of the club, and Manley's closest chums.

"See what Hal says," cried Foster.

"What do you think of this, Joe?" demanded Cranston.

The scrap of paper was handed over for their inspection, and the two lieutenants were told the circumstances of its finding.

"It's mighty serious—that's what it is!" Hal declared, promptly.

He was always jealous of Manley's safety, for it was said in the club that loyal Spofford breathed only through Manley.

Rockless enough of himself, Hal would go to any extreme to shield Manley from any danger, real or imaginary.

"It'll bear looking into, this bit of paper," was Joe's hastily given opinion.

"But do you see in it any indication of a threat against my life?" queried Frank.

"Why, of course I do," throbbed Hal. "Isn't it plain enough—all but one letter?"

"It looks plain, anyway," decided Joe. "It would be a crime of stupidity to let the thing go by without looking into it. It isn't the first time, Frank, that people have hated you badly enough to want to see you prepared for the grave."

"And I'm still alive," laughed Frank.

"Don't go on believing in luck forever!" begged Foster.

"No," backed up Joe. "When a fellow goes gunning for you, and sees you, the only kind of luck that can help is a bad aim or a spoiled cartridge."

"We'll look into this—we three!" cried Foster, looking at his own pair of followers.

"Where will you start?" asked Frank.

Dick hesitated, then looked blank.

"Of course you can't go around showing this bit of paper to every one in this and other near-by towns. It would take too long," smiled Frank.

"And especially," added Cranston, soberly, "as it appears that a meeting of the plotters is to be held on Monday, and this is Monday afternoon."

"The time's fearfully short," sighed Hal.

"Shall I tell you how to start on a matter like this?" Frank asked.

In an instant all of the boys were gazing at their young leader searchingly.

"This looks like the writing of an educated man," Frank went on, glibly. "An educated man sometimes has a bank account. Now, if he lived in Woodstock, there would be only one bank here in which he could deposit. Bank clerks are wonderfully trained for remembering handwriting. If the writer of this letter has been doing business through our bank, the bank people would know his writing in a second. But suppose he is a stranger. Evidently he has been using the postoffice. So——"

"Ask the postmaster!" flashed Dick Foster.

"Yes," Frank nodded. "That's one of our best first chances."

"Then be quick about it!" begged Cranston.

"Come along, Hal, and we'll see if we can find out anything," urged Manley, rising. The two chums hurried out together, while the others remained behind in the board-room.

Five minutes later Manley and his chum stood before the postmaster in the latter's little private office. That official held the scrap of paper in his hand.

"We thought there was a bare chance that you would know the writing as being that which you have seen on some letters that have been mailed here," suggested Frank.

Postmaster Bruce started, as his gaze fell on the letters. "kill Manle." But he looked up calmly.

"By the merest chance, Manley, I do remember that handwriting. Having seen it once, I could not forget it. There was an odd circumstance about it, too. An old man brought in four letters, bought stamps and mailed the let-



ters. He was accompanied by a man who seemed to be about forty years old. After mailing the letters, the two went out. Almost immediately the younger man came back, said that his friend had decided not to mail the letters, and had sent him back for them. So I took the letters out of the box and handed them over to the friend. Then, wondering if I had done right, I stepped to the street window. I saw the man who had come back for the letters step out to a sleigh, and saw this younger man nod and say: "It's all right." The older man looked so relieved that I knew the return of the letters was all right. Then I forgot all about the matter until just now."

"Will you describe those two men to me," begged Frank.

"The older man was a little more than medium height, but rather bent. He was of very spare figure, and struck me as being quite weak. He was prosperously dressed. I judged that the younger man was an attendant."

"But what did the old man look like?" Frank persisted.

"He had a long, straight nose, hollow and wrinkled cheeks, and a mouth that was sweet, but not very strong. He had a smooth face and very long, gray hair. The most noticeable thing about the face was that it struck one as being the face of a saint."

"The face of a saint!" breathed Hal, ironically.

"The younger man," went on the postmaster, "was taller, broad-shouldered and ruddy. He was a big man, and yet not fat. His eyes, like the old man's, were blue, but his nose was big and sharp. He looked more like an eagle—or a hawk. He had a shifty look. He did not appear as prosperous as the old man, but looked more like an employe. They drove away together in the sleigh."

"One horse or a pair to that sleigh?" asked Frank, quickly.

"One horse—a big, raw-boned roan."

"Cutter, or two-seated sleigh?"

"Cutter."

"It's color?"

"Green, with a small, red stripe."

"What kind of robes?"

"The only one I saw looked like a black bear skin."

"You have seen neither men since?"

"Neither."

"If you do, will you make a strong point of finding out who they are?"

"That I certainly will, Manley."

"And will you do me the great favor of saying nothing about this for the present?"

"In view of what I read on this slip, I will certainly keep quiet, Frank," the postmaster promised, earnestly.

"But I hope it is nothing at all serious."

"That's what I don't know," Frank replied, as he rose and buttoned his coat. "But I mean to find out!"

"The face of a saint!" muttered Hal, as they gained the street. "The face of a man who is plotting to kill you, and making appointments with others for that purpose."

"We're going to gaze on that face soon, if it hangs out around here," muttered Frank.

"How will you find out where to look for it?"

"There's Johnson's grocery up the street," Frank replied. "It's the swellest-looking store of its kind in Woodstock, and the place where a stranger would be apt to go. Our saintly old man is a newcomer, if he lives around here. Johnson may know the descriptions and the horse and sleigh."

A guess that proved quite correct. Johnson told the boys that the younger man and the sleigh had been at the store twice, several days ago, but had not been there of late.

"Know where the fellow lived?" asked Frank, casually.

"No; for the man gave no name or address, but carried the groceries away with him. But one of my drivers said he had seen the man driving into the Stearns place, on the river road, about three miles from here, and two from Bradford."

"The Stearns place?" Frank repeated, coolly.

Then, looking at Hal, he added:

"That can't be the fellow we were thinking of. Thank you, Mr. Johnson."

But, once out of hearing of the grocer, Frank whispered, excitedly:

"We couldn't make a much better start than that, Hal! We know where to look for our people."

"I suppose it's a good deal better to look for them," Hal advised, "than to wait for them to send some one to look for you. But the hoary-headed old sinner—with the face of a saint! 'Kill Manley,' eh?"

## CHAPTER II.

### SOMETHING DOING THAT WAS QUEER.

"Great Dewey! It's a ghostly-looking place!" muttered Hal, shivering slightly.

"It ought to be," uttered Joe, "if it's the headquarters of the gang who've undertaken to convert Frank into a ghost."

"I don't see anything strange about the place," retorted Manley, "except that the house is wholly dark, which looks strange for a house that people are living in."

The three leaders of the club had skated up the river, leaving behind the Trouble Trio, much to the disappointment of Masters Foster, Cranston and Lucas.

It was early dark now, as they stood in the river road, looking across wide grounds at the Stearns place.

This estate had been the summer home of its owner years ago. Now, it was rented to strangers from town in the summer time.

The house stood back nearly an eighth of a mile from the road, in the midst of some twenty acres.

Close to the house were little groves of trees that all but hid the house in the summer time.



Down by the gate was a gardener's cottage that now was plainly untenanted.

A large, old-fashioned building of stone, containing probably some thirty rooms, was the main house. Some two hundred feet to one side of it was a stone stable.

The night was so dark that the boys could see but little as far back from the road as the house stood.

But they had often passed the place, and were familiar with its layout.

"We'll take a snoop," Frank suggested. "Come on."

"I hope we're not seen from that dark house," muttered Hal. "Somehow, the old place gives me the creeps."

"If we see any one coming," suggested Frank, "we can dodge behind trees."

"But our black clothes will show up against the white snow," protested Spofford.

"It's a chance we'll have to take. Come on."

Yet, as they entered the grounds, they did not approach the house by the driveway, but at some distance from it.

A line of trees offered them some protection from observation.

As they went forward they dodged from tree to tree.

From not a single window did there come a ray of light.

In the cold and the intense darkness the big, old house loomed up like something unreal.

Hal was to be excused for the uneasy shudders that he could not suppress.

Frank, on the other hand, was wide-eyed and watchful, but was not oppressed by dread.

Joe looked at the whole scene much as a bulldog might have done—not impressed, but merely mildly curious.

At last they stood together behind two tall trees some three hundred feet from this unreal habitation.

"What's that over there?" asked Manley, pointing, as he peered through the blackness.

"Looks like some kind of a frame," Joe answered, as he, too, peered.

"Wait here a few moments," directed Frank.

"What are you going to do?" Hal asked, nervously.

"Going over for a close look at that frame."

"Be careful!"

"Of what?"

"That you're not seen from the house."

"Pooh!" Frank smiled. "There doesn't seem to be a soul about the house."

"But some one may be watching, through darkened windows."

"For what?" scoffed Frank. "If they're plotting against me, do they know that I'm on to it? Do they expect a visit from me?"

Hal could not answer, nor was there time, for Frank had glided off, his progress now visible only by the contrast of his dark clothing against the whiteness of the snow.

As Frank neared that frame, which, about twelve feet high, stood some twenty feet from the side of the house, he, too, felt a shiver.

It looked, for all the world, that frame, like a gallows.

Was that a rope dangling from the cross-beam?

And what was that animal picketed to one of the uprights?

"There's something on the queer here, all right," Frank quivered.

And now he was certain that he made out a rope dangling from the cross-beam of the frame.

The animal picketed there was a cow. This he judged from its shape, though he could not yet see the animal clearly.

"A rope with a noose at the end—a gallows and all!" Frank exclaimed, inwardly, and could not repress an uncanny shiver.

Yet, determined to see this queer thing through to the end, he stole forward, his gaze now fastened on what appeared to be a huge placard fastened to the gallows at a distance of six feet from the ground.

He was forced to step between the house and the gallows before he could read, with difficulty, the great black letters of this legend:

"Yes! This noose is for you! The time to-morrow!"

"For me?" muttered Frank, grimly, as he read. "Nonsense! No one could know that I would see this. But—ugh!"

He could not shake off the uncanny feeling with which this lonesome, gruesome spot afflicted him.

"If I didn't know Hal and Joe are right over there beyond the darkness, I believe I'd turn and skip—fast!" Frank laughed, silently but grimly. "And who could leave a cow out this cold night—and what for?"

He turned, now, for a close look at the cow that formed a part of this nightmarish puzzle.

He took two or three steps toward the animal, then, as he got a closer look at the cow, he stopped short, thrilling with wonder and feeling his hair standing fretfully on end.

"A cow? Great Jupiter! What can this monstrosity be?"

For, though it had the shape of a cow, the horns and the mild eyes of a cow, this marvelous animal was striped like a zebra. And, as nearly as the astounded young athlete could see in the darkness, the stripes appeared to be alternately red, green and blue!

"This is too tough for anything but a nightmare!" Frank protested, rubbing his eyes. "What ails me? Am I seeing things? No; for the thing is here. I am touching it. But—ugh! Gracious!"

It passed believing, even after seeing the animal with waking, wide-open eyes.

"I'd get shut up in a lunatic asylum if I told any one I had seen such a cow," muttered Frank, his teeth almost chattering. "And that grisly gibbet—the noose—the placard. A red, green and blue cow and that loney, silent, awful house. Ugh! I've got to get Hal and Joe to see these things. Then I'll feel more sure about my own sanity!"

Just one swift, all-around look Manley took, to see whether there were anything more in sight to give one the shivers.



Then he turned, swiftly retracing his way to where Hal and Joe were hid.

He found them, told them what he had seen, and added, half pathetically:

"Of course, I don't expect you to take my word. I want you to see for yourselves."

A hundred feet nearer the house three more trees stood together.

Toward them the boys moved swiftly—Hal all eager curiosity and Joe with tightly-compressed lips and a look of fire in his eyes.

Here they halted and peered, Frank's two friends using their eyes hard in the effort to distinguish the rope from the scaffold.

"Gracious! Look there!" Frank muttered, suddenly and uneasily.

He was pointing toward the stable, from which three white-clad figures were advancing in Indian file.

Against the whiteness of the snow these figures would not have been easily visible, had it not been that the white garments glowed with an unearthly, phosphorescent radiance.

"What hocus-pocus is that?" Joe whispered, angrily, but staring intently all the while.

As the boys watched, the figures advanced steadily toward the house, though not passing close to the young watchers.

Fifty feet from the house these ghostly figures rose suddenly in the air.

Still in Indian file, the figures passed up and over the roof, vanishing swiftly.

"Whew!" muttered Prescott. The uncanny feeling had gotten fast hold of him, too, by this time.

But from somewhere in the interior of the house came a soul-piercing scream that made the blood of the boys tingle and then run cold.

Hal honestly felt like running. It was too gruesome—too tearing on the nerves!

Yet, ere any of the trio could stir, there leaped out from one of the darkened windows of the house a bright flash.

With it came a sharp explosion.

Zip! A whizzing bullet carried away Frank Manley's cap.

Had the flight of the ball been an inch lower, Manley would have been killed then and there!

### CHAPTER III.

#### TRAPPED—DITCHED!

Even before Manley had time to dodge, the second shot came.

That bullet fanned his right ear.

Now, the young athlete fell to his knees.

A third flashing shot, within two seconds of the first,

and Manley heard the projectile sing a foot above his head.

Our hero fell forward flat on the snow.

Nor did Hal and Joe delay a second in throwing themselves down in the snow.

The sound of a window closing softly was all they heard.

There were no more shots.

That single, piercing shriek before the shots was the only voice, the only sign of human life that came from that ghostly-looking building.

"All right?" whispered Hal.

"Yes," whispered Manley.

"All right here," breathed Joe. "But, say——"

"Me for the simple life!" thrilled Hal.

"Yes! It's all too wonderful around here," came, barely audible, from Prescott.

They had risen again, with the tree trunks between themselves and the house.

"Shall we light out?" asked Frank.

"Me for flitting," assented Joe.

"Then you'll take my word for the zebra cow?"

"I'd sooner believe you than go to look at the thing!"

"But we mustn't scoot yet," protested Hal.

"And why not?" Joe wanted to know.

"If we leave, what do we learn about those who are plotting Frank's death, perhaps?"

Joe was silent, but Frank replied, slowly:

"There's too much here for us to nose into. We don't know at what second some one will start shooting at us again. This is a job for the police. We're near Bradford. If we hurry there, and tell the police half of what we've seen——"

"They'll lock us up and telegraph for the bug-house doctors," Joe finished, drily.

"No, they won't," Frank disputed. "Chief Gerrity knows us, and he'll listen. Let him come back and raid through this place. We can turn the Bradford Club out to come along, and we can telephone for our own fellows."

"I'd feel safer backed by a regiment of the regular army," proposed Hal, in a grim whisper.

"The first thing is to get out of here," Joe declared.

"And quickly, too," Manley agreed.

"Let's run for it," urged Hal.

"And be seen?" asked Joe.

"We've been seen already," Frank interrupted. "Else why the shots?"

"But if we were seen, why did they let up on us?" Prescott demanded.

"Who can answer any question about this crazy place?" Frank retorted.

"Scoot!" advised Hal.

"That's it," nodded Manley. "Come on!"

He set the example by moving off at a lope, in a straight line for the road.

Hal moved to one side of him, Joe to the other.

There was no sign that their retreat was noted by any one belonging to this gruesome place.

As they ran, they gained confidence, until——



Flop! Manley felt the ground give way beneath him. He pitched, going headlong.

Down he shot, then landed on all fours.

Chug! Bump! Hal and Joe were there beside him.

And now all three of the boys looked up between walls, just making out the sky and the dim stars overhead.

"This is worse than a nightmare!" flashed Manley, springing to his feet and looking up.

They appeared to be some twenty feet below the surface of the earth.

The hard, earthen walls around them were perpendicular.

"A dead-fall!" uttered Hal, almost incredulously.

"Well, we're here," growled Joe. "Maybe we can get out. I hope we can. I'm in a hurry to get home!"

Then he laughed, in dazed fashion, as if amused at his own joke.

"One thing is certain," declared Manley.

"I'm glad one thing is," grunted Prescott. "What is it, in this domain of ghosts, that can be certain?"

"All this queerness wasn't devised for us," asserted Manley. "No one could have known that we were coming here. Then what is the explanation of all these grisly mysteries?"

"What's the answer?" queried Joe, blankly.

"The thing to do," pronounced Hal, promptly, "is to find out whether we can get out of here."

He was examining the earthen walls, and gazing up at the wooden platform, some six feet wide, which had caved inward and dropped them down here.

"We've got to get out of the daze and fluster that this infernal place has put us in," cried Manley, with the first vigor he had shown since his fall. "Joe, get up on my shoulders. Hal, you climb on Joe's shoulders. Then see if you can reach up, or leap out of here. With one fellow out, the rest can be helped up."

"Don't try it," muttered Prescott. "This place is fixed. If we try to get out, something huge will roll in on us."

"It's time to stop joking," Manley retorted, sternly. "We've got to get away from this place, and there isn't a moment to lose. Up with you, Joe!"

As Manley braced himself against the earthen wall, Prescott mounted to his leader's shoulders and stood there.

But a second later he slid down again.

"Some one coming!" he whispered.

Joe's sharp ears had been the first to hear footsteps on the snow above.

Then the others heard, and soon a voice growled:

"Something has got down there!"

Then two heads appeared in the opening framed above.

"Hullo, down there!" came the challenge.

But the three boys remained silent, trusting to the darkness to hide them.

Useless hope! For the flash of an electric pocket-lamp streamed down into the blackness, discovering the three ditched young athletes to the two men above.

"Three boys!" announced the gruff voice.

While the other man called down, menacingly:

"It's a lively mess you've fallen into!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### A CRIME WORSE THAN MURDER.

"Are you going to help us out of this?" called Frank, promptly.

"That depends."

"Depends?" retorted Manley, indignantly. "What do you mean by that?"

"What do you mean by falling down there?" challenged the gruff one.

Nothing worse than you mean by putting such traps in the way of passers-by," snapped Manley.

"How came you here, anyway? What are you doing on private premises?"

Joe and Hal could only wonder at what their leader was driving. That he had a purpose out of the ordinary they felt sure. So they waited and watched the development of the game.

"There are no signs up forbidding people to cross this property," Frank went on, with well-pretended indignation.

"We didn't know any one lived here, anyway?"

"Then what were you prowling around here for?" asked the gruff one, suspiciously.

"Just crossing the grounds on our way to the river," lied Frank, coolly.

"Oh, you were, eh?"

"Of course. We thought we were going skating, instead of being swallowed up in the earth like this. If this is your joke, all right. But it has gone far enough. It's your turn, now, to help us out of this."

"Who are you, anyway?" insisted the gruff one. "Where do you belong?"

"We live in Bradford," lied Frank.

"Oh!"

"What did you think we were doing? Trying to steal something? We go to school and have good homes."

"And got your skates with you to prove your story, I suppose?"

"Certainly. Lower a rope or a ladder, and we'll come up and show you our skates."

"They're all right, I guess," said the gruff one's companion.

"If you think we're not," proposed Manley, "just send for the police. They know who we are. They know our parents."

"Oh, wouldn't it be a cinch if they would send for the police," uttered Hal, under his breath. "Then we'd have the police right at hand to search this infernal place!"

"Wait where you are," called down the gruff one, after a whispered chat with his companion. "I'll get something to let down to you."

He was gone for some time.

"I want you two to go up first," whispered Manley. "If he recognizes me as his intended victim, then you'll be right on the spot to fight with me."



"Here you are," called down the gruff one, at last. "Look out while I send it down."

A ladder was lowered. Hal, seizing the rungs, nimbly ascended, Joe following closely. Then Frank went up.

The two men looked them over closely.

Frank returned the scrutiny with compound interest, though he tried to veil the fact.

The gruff-voiced one answered the description of the old man's driver. He was a big fellow with a brutal face and twinkling, ugly eyes.

The other man, apparently about thirty years of age, dark, with beardless face, was of much smaller build.

"Well, you look like schoolboys, all right," nodded the gruff one. "And you've got your skates with you to back up your yarn. I guess we'll let you go."

"What interest have you, anyway, in this place?" Manley demanded, boldly.

"Oh, I'm a sort of care-taker," came the careless response.

"Live around here?"

"No; not right near. The big house is empty in the winter time."

"If you see us again," went on Frank, with an attempt at pleasantry, "I hope you won't be so rough with us."

"If I see you on this place again," retorted the gruff one, with sudden vigor, "I'll arrest the whole lot of you for trespass. Understand that?"

"You needn't be so cross."

"That's all right. But I'm not going to have a gang of boys running over this place while I have charge of it."

"Oh, all right," nodded Frank, as Hal and Joe turned thankfully to walk away. "We don't want to get into any trouble, of course."

"Well, you will strike trouble, and a lot of it, if you come trespassing on this place."

"Then we won't," promised Manley. "Good night!"

At a bound he was off after his chums. The two men stood looking after them until the darkness of the road had swallowed them up.

"Say, what do you think of that?" breathed Hal, eagerly, as soon as he felt it was safe to talk. "If they've got any designs against you, Frank, it's plain that they don't know you when you run into them."

"It was the old man, the writer of that letter, who might be suspected of designs on Frank," corrected Joe.

They had headed for the river, and now they engaged in putting their skates on with all possible speed.

"Bradford?" queried Joe, as he stood up.

"Bradford, sure!" confirmed Manley. "I don't know what's going on at that infernal place, but the police will be glad of what we can tell them."

They made Bradford at top speed for a skating print. Hurrying through the streets, they caught Chief Gerrity just as he was leaving his desk to go to supper.

But the chief, who knew his callers well, listened with amazement to what they had to tell him.

"I wouldn't take much stock in that yarn, from most

folks," said Gerrity, bluntly. "But I don't believe you youngsters would string me."

"Then you'll look into this business?" queried Frank.

"At once."

Chief Gerrity tapped a bell. To the policeman who entered he gave an order that three men be ready to accompany him at once.

"I can get Tod Owen to turn out some of the Bradford boys, if you want people enough to surround the house," Frank hinted.

"I don't," Mr. Gerrity retorted, crisply. "The quieter this thing can be done, the better. But you youngsters can go, if you want to. I've got a puny big enough to carry us all."

In less than five minutes the four policemen and the three Woodstock boys were traveling down the road.

They halted not far from the Stearns place, the chief tying the horses and blanketing them.

Then, stealthily, the chief, after sending one man around to the rear of the great house, stepped up to the porch and rang the bell.

There was no answer. The chief rang again.

Then, very quietly, he said to one of his policemen:

"Pry off the shutter, break a pane of glass, and let us in."

With a short crowbar the policeman quickly pried off one of the wooden shutters. There was a sound of smashing glass, and then the window went up.

Flashing their electric search-lights, the three policemen entered, followed by the trio of young athletes.

It was a reception-room into which they had stepped. It was cold there, but in the halls they found heat.

"Any one in this house?" bellowed Chief Gerrity. "If there is, let him come forward. We are the police!"

But there came no answer.

The gas was not turned on, but in some of the rooms there were lamps. These the chief lighted wherever he passed.

Most of the rooms on the lower floor were heated, showing recent occupancy.

But now, certainly, the house seemed deserted.

Now, suddenly, from outside, came the loud, hoarse challenge:

"Halt, in the name of the law!"

Police and Up and At 'Em Boys sprang to the nearest windows.

As they did so, there came the sharp patter of a horse's hoofs, the jingle of sleigh-bells, and the sound of a shot.

"What is it, Marty?" called Chief Gerrity, from an open window, to the policeman in the grounds near-by who stood with a still-smoking revolver in his hand.

"Three men in a cutter, chief, just left the stable, going like mad. They're 'way out in the road now."

"No use to chase them, then," growled the chief. "Our nags are too slow."

"It was a mistake not to have watched the stables," sighed Frank.

"Those people were in the stable when we got here," re-



torted the chief. "They didn't leave the house for the stable after we got here, or Marty would have seen them going. Manley, after you youngsters were seen here, those rascals were afraid of just such a call as this, and they moved to the stable, to be ready."

"Look here, chief!" called one of the policemen, from another room that he had just entered.

The call led the whole party to the spot.

In this room there was an arm-chair, provided with straps, as if for the purpose of strapping some one there.

Then there was also a bed, provided with similar straps.

"The deuce!" uttered Gerrity, and scratched his head. "This begins to look like a bug-house. They strap crazy people down in that way when they turn violent."

Frank had opened his eyes very wide, but he said nothing.

There was nothing more of interest found in the house, except a loaded repeating rifle in a corner of the dining-room.

Three empty shells were found on the floor.

"The three shots that were fired at us," Frank declared.

Portions of the house gave evidence of having been lived in up to the present hour, and that was all else that the searchers discovered.

"What on earth can the game be?" wondered Gerrity, scratching his head.

"It's a new game for this part of the country, whatever it is," smiled Frank.

"We're not to see the game played, anyway," went on the police chief, disgustedly.

"Not unless we make it part of our game to follow up the green sleigh with the red stripe, and the roan horse," nodded Manley.

"Let's look at the yard," suggested Joe, and outside they went.

The gallows frame still stood in its place, but the halter was gone.

So was the zebra cow, though the hoof-marks of the animal were visible in the snow.

"I've a taste for looking at the stable," ventured Frank.

Over to that building they went. Officer Marty had preceded them.

Now, with his flash-lamp in hand, he met them at the open door of the stable.

"Am I dreaming, chief, or have I 'got 'em'?" he asked.

"What's the matter, Marty?"

"Come inside, all of you. I'll be mighty glad if you all see the same things I've been seeing!"

He led them inside, to the stall-room.

There, in a stall, stood the zebra cow, in all the glory of her green, red and blue stripes.

"Painted on, or dyed there," pronounced the chief, studying the stripes at close range.

"And look at this unholy thing," begged Marty, leading them to another stall.

Here, perched on the edge of the manger, chattering and blinking stupidly at the lights, sat a fat old monkey.

"I'm glad you folks see these things, too," grunted Marty, with genuine relief. "But look in the next stall!"

There, huddled up in a box, crated at the top, was a ten- or twelve-foot snake of the boa-constrictor species.

"Ain't it ugly?" gasped Officer Marty. "And ain't I glad that others see the same things I do!"

"The poor reptile is nearly dead with the cold," muttered Gerrity.

"And what's all this toggery?" demanded Marty, leading them further and pointing to a heap of white toggery on the floor.

"Just let the lights out for a minute, will you?" begged Frank.

"In this cold-chill factory?" gasped Marty.

But the lights went out.

In the dark the white toggery glowed with such an unnatural light that Marty, with a yell, turned on his light again.

"That cloth has been fixed with some preparation of phosphorus," muttered Manley, thoughtfully. "Now, fellows, you understand the three ghosts that we saw cross the lawn and vanish up over the roof. Here are the ghosts."

"And here are pulleys," reported Joe, turning the white goods over.

"Pulleys meant to run over a wire. That's the way the ghosts were moved," Frank explained.

Grabbing up the togs, they shook them out at full length. Now, the ghosts of an hour ago stood explained.

There was other queer stuff here in this barn. In a box were black gowns and masks. There was a grisly black coffin, with skull and cross-bones painted in white. With the lights turned off, these emblems glowed phosphorescently.

"When I saw the strap chair and bed in the house," cried Chief Gerrity, "I thought some one might be using the house to keep a crazy man in. But, by the looks of these things, all the folks here must have been as crazy as anarchists."

Now Frank spoke, slowly:

"We have stumbled upon an infamous crime."

"Not murder, anyway, by the looks," responded the chief.

"A crime worse than murder!" Frank Manley cried, ringingly. "You saw the straps by which a crazy man could be held down in his violence. But here—and in that gallows—you have seen the things that could, by working on his imagination, make him violent!"

"What do you make of it all, then?" demanded the chief, eagerly.

"We find here the evidences of a crime worse than murder! These things are the tools that have been used in destroying some man's mind! With a sane man, perhaps with a mind a little weak, these grisly things have been used to drive reason from his brain. In plain words, chief, the rascals who have fled from you have been using these premises and these infamous tools in the manufac-



ture of a lunatic! They have been deliberately trying to drive some poor man crazy!"

"Great Scott!" gasped the chief. "It surely does look like it! Then this is going to be a bigger case than we dreamed of. But we'll follow it up! We'll run this thing through to the end. We'll unearth the job! Boys, you must give me your hard and fast promise that you won't spread this story and spoil this chase."

"We won't talk," promised Frank.

But he added to himself:

"We'll delve into this thing ourselves, though! And two to one we'll know the real story before you policemen get in sight of it!"

## CHAPTER V.

### INTO THE LION'S JAWS!

"So that's the new cold-chill factory, as Policeman Marty would call it?" muttered Joe.

It was a little after dark on the day following.

The three leaders of the club had gotten track almost sooner than they had expected, of the roan horse, the green sleigh and its three occupants.

For Jackets Winston, skating on the ice the evening before, had seen the sleigh cross the river on the ice and disappear on the further shore.

Knowing nothing about the sleigh and its passengers, Winston had thought no more about it until Frank himself had sought out the little athlete for the purpose of asking him to join in the hunt.

Whether on skates, or on his feet, Winston was an untiring traveler. Moreover, he had a faculty for following up just such chases as the green sleigh offered.

This morning he had crossed the ice at the spot where the sleigh had vanished.

He had followed it as far as the little postoffice village of Burbank.

Then came the school day. But, as soon as the academy had let out in the afternoon, Winston had taken up the chase again. This time Hal was with him.

Frank and Joe had gone off from Burbank, on reaching it, on still another clue.

This clue, afforded by the village postmaster, who was also the keeper of the only store in Burbank, had led them to the low, squat, white farmhouse at which Frank and Joe were now staring.

It was more than a quarter of a mile from any other habitation. The little two-story house, with a tumble-down barn close by, were well back from a lonesome road.

Nor had Frank and Joe made any guess-work about this lonely farmhouse being the place of which they were in search.

They had just stolen from the barn, in which they had found the identical horse and sleigh.

Now, still standing in the shadow of the barn, the two young athletes were peering across the snow at the house.

There were lights there—one in the kitchen, another in a front room, and a third upstairs.

"Those lights give it a more cheerful look than that other house," grunted Joe.

"Perhaps they've finished their job of making some poor wretch a lunatic," hazarded Frank. "I wish Hal and little Jackets were here."

"The police?"

"There are none in that little village of Burbank. And the police of Woodstock and Bradford have no authority here."

"A posse of farmers?" hinted Joe.

"What are we going to tell them?"

"What we know."

"And what do we know?" demanded Frank.

Joe looked puzzled.

"Something ought to be done," he insisted.

"And something can be done," Frank retorted, quickly. "See here, Joe, how many of the rascals are there supposed to be? Two; perhaps three. If we can find the victim of this outrage, we may be able to spirit him away."

"Spirit a crazy man away?" queried Joe. "And depend upon him to keep quiet while we're getting out?"

"At all events, Joe, if we can get inside that house and get an idea of what is going on, we'll know better what to do."

"Get into the house?" Prescott repeated. "That appeals to me. Go ahead!"

"'Kill Manley?'" mused Frank, only half aloud. "Joe, I'm mighty eager to know what part of this plot is directed against me, and why."

"Go ahead. I'll follow. We'll be at the bottom of something or other mighty soon," Joe urged, proddingly.

But Frank needed no urging. He stole forward in the night, halting a few yards from a window through which the kitchen light shone.

There, seated in a corner, smoking, and looking occasionally at a pot on the cook-stove, sat their gruff man.

He was in his shirt-sleeves, and, seemingly, very much at home and contented with himself.

But the other—the younger and darker man—was not visible anywhere, though the young athletes got a good, fair look into the lighted front room also.

"We can climb this porch, and try to get in upstairs," mused Frank, looking at the porch columns. "It's an easy climb. We ought not to make any noise."

"Go ahead," Prescott chimed in, recklessly.

He was always willing to follow his leader anywhere, no matter into what.

Frank went up the column with an ease and stealth that came from long practice in the gymnasium.

Gaining the porch roof, he knelt to cross it, not trusting to the creaking that a tread might cause.



Joe was quickly at his side, waiting in silence while his leader made up his mind.

Just ahead of them, across the little roof, were the two windows of what was probably a bedroom. Shades were drawn down over both windows, and the light came but dimly through.

Frank's hand went up, as a signal to Joe to remain where he was. Then Manley crept forward on his knees.

There was no catch on the window that our hero approached.

After a few moments of listening, and hearing nothing from inside, Frank softly tried the window.

It yielded, but he did not attempt, just then, to force it up more than a couple of inches.

The shade, however, still shut out all view of the room beyond.

Drawing a pin from his coat lapel, Frank carefully pricked three or four holes in the shade. Then he bent forward to peer inside through the tiny openings.

He saw enough to prompt him to raise the window still more. Then, raising the shade also, he crept into the room.

Joe, ignorant of what was beyond, breathlessly followed.

They found themselves in a farmhouse bedroom furnished in the plainest manner.

On the bureau a light burned, though dimly.

There were two chairs and a bed.

On the bed lay, as Manley had seen before entering the room, a hollow-faced, gray-haired old man.

His hands, resting on the coverlid, were secured to the sides of the bed by straps, so arranged that the sufferer could not use either hand in freeing the other.

He was asleep as they entered. They moved so softly that they did not awake him.

There were great, black rings under the sleeper's eyes. His face was furrowed, as though by suffering and care.

Yet there was something wonderfully sweet about that aged face.

"The face of a saint, as Postmaster Bruce said," Joe whispered in Manley's ear.

"Yet he is the one that wrote the letter that spoke of killing me," returned Frank, greatly puzzled.

"That letter may have been meant for some one as a warning to be given you," argued Joe, in that same soft whisper.

"It's a great puzzle, a tormenting one."

As they moved nearer, still studying the face of the sleeper, the latter awoke and opened his eyes.

For a moment or so he looked at them dully. Then alarm flashed into his face. He would have screamed out, but Frank bent over him, placing a firm hand over the old man's mouth.

"Be silent," whispered Frank. "We are friends—perhaps the best friends you ever had, and in the hour of great need!"

Something in the kindness of Manley's gaze, and in the upright friendliness of Joe's beaming look, must have re-

assured the startled one, for now there was only curiosity in his slowly rolling eyes.

"That's better," whispered Frank, gently, as he took his hand away from the old man's mouth. "Now, tell us what you are doing here, and we will see how we can serve you. What are you doing here, and who are you?"

"They tell me that I am not in my right mind—that I am crazy," replied the sufferer, in so low a voice that Frank had to bend over him to catch the words.

"Nonsense," Manley whispered, a trifle sharply. "You are no more crazy than we are. But some one is trying to injure you. We have come to put a stop to that."

"Abbott is very kind to me—though very firm," came the whispered protest. "But he says that my mind is off its hinges."

"And who is Abbott?"

"He is my nurse, I guess, or keeper."

"Is he the man who drove to the postoffice with you?"

"Yes."

"A big fellow?"

"Yes."

"And with a gruff voice?"

"Yes, yes!"

"He's a scoundrel," Frank whispered, vehemently. "Listen! You are not crazy. That I know by looking at your eyes now. But that villain, Abbott, is trying to persuade you that your mind is unhinged. You have seen strange things—striped cows, gallows, snakes, monkeys——"

"Yes, yes, yes!" whispered the old man, trying to recoil under the bedclothes.

"And you really did see them," Frank went on, in a whisper. "We've seen the same things. Abbott showed them to you on purpose. It was a part of his plan. Will you believe what I tell you?"

"Ye-es, I think so."

"Then Abbott is such a big scoundrel that the police are after him. They are trying to save you from Abbott. We are your friends, and we wish to get you away from here. These straps hurt you, do they not?"

"Sometimes."

"They won't, any more."

Frank deftly unfastened the straps.

"There are others on my ankles," whispered the old man, eagerly.

Pulling up the clothes at the foot of the bed, Frank found and removed the ankle-straps.

"Look in that closet, Joe, and see if his clothes are there," directed Manley.

As Joe stepped away, Frank again bent over the old man to say:

"Now, think, and be very sure you answer me right. Who are you? Your name? Your right name, that people call you by?"

Without a moment's hesitation the answer came:

"Hiram W. Ingram."

"Now, where is your home?"

"Raleigh, New Jersey."



"You are Hiram W. Ingram, of Raleigh, N. J.? You are absolutely sure of this?"

"Absolutely sure."

"Good enough!"

Joe, having reported, in a whisper, from the closet that there was clothing there, was now engaged in taking it down from the hooks.

"In the name of heaven, look there!" suddenly screamed Mr. Ingram.

He tried, weakly, to sit up in bed, as he pointed, his eyes staring with terror.

Frank turned, like a flash. He had only time to see a figure enveloped in a flowing black robe, and with a death's-head mask on, when something swished, rushed through the air.

The something was a club, in the hands of the newcomer.

It landed on one of Manley's temples, felling him to the floor.

"What the——" gasped Joe, who had neither heard nor seen the approach of this black-enveloped apparition.

He turned to leap out of the closet, but he was too late.

At a bound the grisly newcomer reached the closet door.

He slammed it shut, penning Joe inside.

Then this thing in black found its voice and lifted it, shouting:

"Here—and here, quick as lightning! Trouble—and a barrel of it!"

Joe fought like a demon to get out of his trap.

After a glance at him, the black-enveloped one turned to Manley.

Between them the two wretches bound Manley's wrists behind his back.

Then, while the younger man secured and tied Frank's flying feet, he in black attended to Joe ere that young athlete's scattered wits began to return to him.

"Got 'em both!" grunted the voice behind the death's-head mask.

"Why, that's Abbott's voice!" cried Mr. Ingram, suddenly.

That poor, terrified soul had been quaking with terror during the enactment of the tragedy.

But now he sat up in bed with the light of a newer and greater terror in his eyes.

He in black leaped forward to the bed, seizing the old man's wrists and again strapping them securely.

"Come along," directed the younger man, lifting Frank and turning to leave the room.

The other wretch followed, with Joe in his arms.

The two young athletes were carried into another bedroom, where, in the dark, they were dropped on the floor.

Then, while Abbott, for it was he in the black robe, remained with them, the younger man hurried out, but was soon back with a light.

Abbott, in the meantime, had thrown aside robe and mask. He now appeared in his shirt-sleeves. On his feet were soft list slippers that enabled him to glide about without noise.

"Why, these are two of the same youngsters we caught in the dead-fall at the other place," cried the younger man, as he held the lamp close to the faces of the boys.

"Yes," gruffed Abbott.

"What does this mean?" demanded the younger man of Frank.

"It seems to me," retorted Manley, "that we might very well put that question to you."

"What reason did you have for following us here?" Abbott demanded, in an ugly, menacing voice.

"At least as good a reason as you had for coming here," mocked the young captain of the Up and At 'Em Boys.

"Who sent you?"

"Guess!"

"You'd better be honest with us," warned Abbott. "We won't stand any fooling, and we have the whip-handle in this house."

"For a few minutes, perhaps," Frank jeered.

"Oh!"

The exclamation came, sharply, from the younger man. Then he drew Abbott out into the hallway and whispered.

Abbott came back alone. In sullen silence he examined the lashings on the boys' wrists and ankles.

Then, with a growl he rose and went hurriedly out.

"Roll close," whispered Frank.

Joe did so.

"If we can only use our fingers to help untie each other!" urged Frank.

## CHAPTER VI.

### IN THE CRATER OF FLAME.

Frank, more than three-quarters stunned, and feeling strangely helpless, lay on the floor.

He was hardly conscious enough to care whether he moved or not.

But he heard, vaguely, the sound of rapidly approaching feet, and heard, too, Joe's frantic efforts to get out of the closet.

The combined din brought the young athlete back to some notion of the need of action, just as the man who had been lustily summoned dashed into the room.

"Fall on that meddler there!" panted the black-enveloped one at the closet door. "Kill him, if you have to—but don't let him get away!"

In another instant Frank found himself in the strong grip of the younger man of the pair.

Just then he in the black robe slipped suddenly back, allowing the closet door to open.

Out Joe dashed, but only to be struck over the head with the club.

Down in a heap went Prescott—utterly down and out.



They tried—tried desperately hard. Never before had they had any idea how difficult that seemingly simple feat of liberation is.

As they struggled, they heard the sound of feet going down the stairs. Then all was still for some minutes.

The next sound that reached them was the sound of sleigh bells—of horses' feet.

"They're driving away," whispered Frank. "And Mr. Ingram with them, of course."

"We can take our time, then," groaned Joe, pausing in his straining effort to get control of the knot at Manley's wrists. "We couldn't catch up with that sleigh, once it gets a quarter of a mile start."

"We've been nicely tricked again," uttered Manley, disgustedly. Then he added, almost despairingly:

"And that poor old soul, Ingram, in the clutches of such scoundrels!"

"What's that noise?" demanded Joe, suddenly, and both listened intently.

To their ears came a light, brisk, crackling sound. The two young athletes listened, perplexedly.

"Merciful heaven!" Frank gasped, suddenly. "Joe, do you smell the smoke?"

"What——"

"They've set the house afire and driven off!"

"Quick, Frank! Let me get at your wrists again! Oh, we must get out of this!"

There could be no doubt of the correctness of Manley's awful guess.

Plainly enough now the crackling was that of mounting, devouring flame. And the smell of smoke was strong—growing every moment stronger.

"What desperate business theirs must be—that they'd take such a means to keep us from spoiling their plans!" groaned Manley. "What luck with the knots, Joe?"

"None!" choked Prescott. "Frank, I'm afraid it's all over but the roasting!"

"Then let me have a try at your knots."

Back to back on the floor they lay. Manley's trembling fingers seemed to refuse to do their duty.

In vain the awe-struck young athlete tried to still the tremor in his hands.

As the minutes went by the roar of flames became louder. They could feel the heat, now. The smoke and the hot air were gradually choking them.

"Give it up!" muttered Joe.

"I can't!" retorted Frank. "Not while there's a breath of life left!"

Then, over all the crackling din, came the loud shout:

"Any one in this burning house?"

It was Hal Spofford's voice from outside.

All the strength of their voices went into the cheer with which the two bound young athletes answered.

Then they kept on shouting, as a guide, while they heard Spofford groping his way through the blazing house.

Into the room burst Hal, followed closely by Jackets.

No time was wasted now in words.

Both captives were quickly freed and yanked to their feet.

"Come along!" begged Hal. "In two minutes more we can't get out of this seething furnace!"

But Frank, grabbing up the lamp, dashed into the bedroom in which old Mr. Ingram had lain.

The bed was empty, but Manley was not satisfied until he had looked into the clothes-closet and had found that also empty.

Then they left the house, going out through the open window and jumping down from the porch.

"We were heading for home, and saw the blaze," Hal now found time to explain.

"And we scented something wrong at once," Jackets added.

At a little distance the boys turned to watch the house. A part of the roof caved in, sending a shower of fiery sparks. In three minutes more the last of the building had toppled into the bed of flames.

"The last of this place, but only the beginning of the chase!" uttered Frank, as they turned away. "But we've a clue now, if only that poor victim remembered enough to give his real name and address."

"'Kill Manley?'" mused Joe, as he plodded along. "Well, they came mighty near succeeding, but what interest in it could that poor old soul have had who wrote the letter. 'Kill Manley?' They'll kill poor old Hiram Ingram beyond a doubt!"

## CHAPTER VII.

"IF YOU WIN AT THE NEW GAME IT MEANS A LIFE SAVED!"

"There'll be some boys killed at this blamed foolishness!"

That was the disgusted comment of a man who had paused to look on at the preparations for the first trial of Manley's new game.

For, with ice sports so few in number, the people of Woodstock and Bradford had been clamoring for a new sport.

It consisted in a quarter-mile dash on skates, with a jump over a two-foot hurdle at every forty yards.

There were eleven of these hurdles now stretched out over the course, which began at the first bend of the river.

The hurdles were made by driving iron stakes through the ice, there being an "eye" at the top of every stake.

Through these eyes a cord was stretched across between the tops of each pair of iron stakes, the ends being so lightly fastened that they would come out of the "eyes" without tripping the skaters, in case the cord were struck by a skate while the jump was being made.

The cord of each hurdle was thus exactly two feet above the ice.

With eleven such hurdles to jump while skating at full speed over a quarter of a mile the sport was exciting enough—and, for novices, dangerous enough.



Just beyond the course three hurdles had been erected for practice work. The contestants in the coming race did not go near these practice hurdles now, but many of the other members of both the Woodstock and Bradford clubs were trying their luck at the sport.

Flop! A Bradford boy, catching the point of his skate on a hummock near one of these practice hurdles, pitched forward on his face, injuring his nose and almost breaking that useful organ.

It was this accident that had called forth the man's remark about "blamed foolishness."

"What did you get up a pesky game like that for?" asked Frank's critic, as the young Woodstock captain skated slowly by.

"What's the matter with it?" asked Frank, wheeling and stopping.

"Well, that Bradford boy came mighty near smashing in his whole face just now."

"I saw him," Frank replied. "He was careless, and didn't take his hurdle according to instructions. He struck an ice hummock."

"Humph! It's too risky."

"So is war," retorted Frank, coolly. "Would you advise a young man to enlist and serve his country in war-time?"

"The fellow that does is an idiot."

"I don't believe we can get up any argument," smiled Frank. "The man who wouldn't take any risk to protect his country's flag isn't prepared to see the sense in the slighter risks of athletics."

"Good!" cried another man, standing near. "If we had no young athletes our young men would grow up a lot of molly-coddles."

There were other murmurs of approval for Manley. The man who saw no use in taking risks moved uncomfortably away.

"Of course, it's dangerous," Frank replied to a woman who asked him about the game. "Jumping a two-foot hurdle is baby's play. But when one is on skates, going at high speed, and has to land on skates again after the jump, it takes a little nerve to do it. But don't you think, madam, that boys who grow up trained to take a few risks are likely to make braver and more useful citizens?"

The race was bound to be a short one. Yet it had attracted a crowd of more than a thousand people.

There was comfort, too, for those who wanted to pay a little for it. A portable grandstand had been erected at the beginning of the course. Here were seats and carriage blankets for hire, that those who wished might protect themselves from the bright, snapping cold of the day.

Saturday afternoon had come around. Since the burning of the farmhouse near Burbank, Frank and his two lieutenants had been unable to get any further track of Hiram Ingram and the latter's persecutors, as the boys firmly believed Abbott and his companions to be.

True, both the Bradford and the Woodstock police had written to the New Jersey town in which Ingram had claimed to live

But the Raleigh police had replied, scouting the whole story. Ingram was a resident of that town, and a wealthy one, but he was well known to be in Europe. Moreover, though an old man, Mr. Ingram had anything but an emaciated face. The Raleigh police hinted very broadly that some lunatic merely fancied that he was Hiram Ingram.

And there the matter had dropped, for lack of further information.

Dropped, that is, with the exception of the leaders of the Up and At 'Em Boys.

"That was Ingram," Frank had declared, with conviction. "I don't care whether he is supposed to be in Europe or not. If Abbott and his friend had had only an ordinary lunatic in their custody they would not have dodged the police so swiftly. Nor would they have tried to burn us up in the farmhouse."

"Even if it isn't the real Ingram that they had with them," Joe had answered, "there was some awful crime in progress. I dream nights of the haunting face of that poor old man."

Yet, though the three, with the aid of Jackets and the Trouble Trio had scouted over the country for miles around, they had been able to secure no further tidings of the old man and his captors.

It looked as if the case would have to be dropped for lack of information.

In the meantime, the athletic affairs of the club had not been neglected in the least.

Woodstock was well prepared for the new style of race. Now the four Woodstock entrants for the race were on the scene. They were: Frank, Hal, Joe and Jackets Winston.

They were waiting for the Bradford contingent of racers, who were now dressing for the race down at the Woodstock gym.

The crowd was waiting, too, and stamping its feet to keep warm.

Frank and Hal skated over to where their sweethearts, Kitty Dunstan and Grace Scott stood just inside the rope.

"A Woodstock day?" smiled Kitty, inquiringly.

"I hope so, of course," Frank answered. "But, as you know, Bradford is mighty clever on the skates."

"Can't you come in first at something?" Grace asked, teasingly, of Hal.

"Not when Manley is entered in the same thing," Spoford retorted, promptly.

"Are you going to try?" insisted Grace.

"Of course," Hal protested. "But I've never been ahead of Frank in anything but once."

"Where was that?" asked Grace, pretending to try to remember.

"In my mother's affections," laughed Hal.

"It's quite credit enough being second to Frank, isn't it?" smiled Kitty.

"Exactly," nodded Hal. "Yet I always try to get in ahead. I can't—that's all."

"Here they come at last!" shouted some one.

"Hurrah for Bradford!"



Tod Owen came slowly up the river, leading his quartette of entrants. Off to one side skated old Hek Owen, Tod's father, ex-athlete and backer of the Bradford club.

"Twenty minutes to spare!" called Frank, as the Bradford boys came near.

"I know it," Tod replied, lifting his cap to the girls. "We're going in for a little lazy practice."

"You've had more practice all the week than we have," laughed Frank.

"I know we have," Tod answered, slowing up and nodding at Kitty and Grace. "But you see, Frank, in trying to overhaul your club we've taken your idea that one can't practice too much."

With that the Bradford boys went on to the practice hurdles.

"Frank! Frank!"

The call came in an excited voice. Dick Foster was skating as fast as he could come from Woodstock. He waved his arms as if in great flutter over something.

The gestures were beckoning, too. Frank skated out to where Dick halted in the middle of the ice.

"See that man coming?" demanded Dick, nodding down the river at a somewhat portly, middle-aged man who was making slow progress on skates, aided by Cranston and Lucas, who held to one of his chubby hands on either side.

"That's what kept us," Dick went on eagerly. "We couldn't get him started before."

"What is he?" asked Frank, good-naturedly.

"He's a find—a big find!" Dick exclaimed, importantly.

"Yes?" smiled Manley. "What's his specialty."

"Oh, you'll quit your joshing when you know about him," Dick retorted, rebukingly.

Then, lowering his voice to a whisper, he added:

"Frank that man knows all about Mr. Ingram!"

It was Manley's turn to jump with eagerness.

"What do you mean, Dick? Talk up quickly!"

"Oh, I thought you'd be interested," jeered Foster. "Frank, that man—his name is Simmons—comes from Raleigh!"

"You're sure of that?"

"No," said Dick, soberly, "I have only his word for it. But Simmons doesn't look like a fakir, does he?"

"He looks like a simple, good-natured slob," Manley returned, slowly, as he studied the slowly approaching man, who was being towed up the ice on skates.

"Well, he knows a heap that you'll be glad to know," went on Dick, warmly.

"Then let's meet him and talk to him at once," proposed Frank.

Off down the ice they went, at good speed, hauling up short before Mr. Simmons.

"This is Manley," was Dick's excited form of introduction.

"Glad to know you're Manley," grinned Simmons, good-naturedly.

At a swift signal from Frank, the Trouble Trio, though highly disappointed, skated away.

"I understand that you come from Raleigh, N. J.?" began Manley.

"That's where I live when at home," the stranger admitted.

"And that you know a great deal about Mr. Ingram."

"Well, he belongs to our church. I'm the treasurer, you see, and Hiram Ingram is the biggest contributor."

"And you've come over here to look into this matter—to help us?"

"Well, I don't know about that," replied Mr. Simmons, quizzically. "The church folks thought maybe I'd better come over and look into this thing, so I came. But they don't take much stock in the story, and I don't, either."

"Why not?" Frank asked, sharply.

"Well, for one reason," replied Simmons, as he bit a chew out of a piece of tobacco, "our pastor gets letters pretty frequent from Hiram Ingram."

"Letters?"

"And they're postmarked in France," continued Mr. Simmons, amiably.

"How long since you got the last letter?"

"About a fortnight ago—and there was a pretty fair-size check in the letter, too. That don't look as if Mr. Ingram was in this country, does it? Does it look as if Hiram Ingram was on this side of the pond, and kiting around the country with two bug-house experts? I think not!"

"And I believe you're making a very serious mistake," Frank went on, earnestly.

"Nope; for our Mr. Ingram had plenty of flesh. Your chap is thin and with a very hollow face. The descriptions don't jibe."

"Do you know a man named Abbott?" Frank persisted.

"Yes; but he ain't no nurse or loony grafter," asserted Simmons. "He is a horse trainer who used to be in business with Ingram's son."

"Son?"

"Well, stepson."

"What's the young man's name?"

Mr. Simmons remained silent, as if he felt that he was being asked too many questions.

"Won't you tell me?" Frank insisted, anxiously.

"Don't think I will," replied Mr. Simmons, after a long pause. "I've looked into this whole cock-and-bull story, and I'll tell you right out that I don't think much of it. If I help you fellows to go ahead and make a whole lot more fuss, Mr. Ingram won't thank me when he hears about it. And he gives our church so much money that we can't afford to make him mad. No, sir; I reckon I'll go home, and not do any talking before I get there."

"But the stepson's name?" pleaded Frank.

Simmons shook his head.

"We can get that through the police," Manley urged. "Of course, it would make a good deal more of talk than if we got it direct from you. Mr. Ingram might not like having so many inquiries about his family made through the police."



"Eh?" gasped the Jerseyman. "Well, I suppose that's so, too. The stepson's name, then, is Walter Butler."

"Does he live in Raleigh?"

"No."

"Where, please?"

"I guess I've told you enough," replied Mr. Simmons, somewhat testily.

"Oh, well, our local police can find that out, too, through the Raleigh police," hinted Manley.

"No, I reckon not," retorted Mr. Simmons. "I guess I'm about the only man in my town who knows where young Butler does live nowadays. And I don't believe I'll tell."

Mr. Simmons folded his hands and closed his lips with the air of a man who has got through talking.

"See here!" cried Frank, impatiently, "I think you're making the mistake of your life. Of course, I know that you don't agree with me. But I feel absolutely certain that you're doing all in your power to help the enemies of Hiram Ingram. Will you do this much for me: Describe the stepson."

After a good deal of hesitation, Simmons complied.

"Why, that's the description of the very man whom we found with Abbott!" cried Frank.

But Simmons smiled unbelievably. He was plainly tired of the whole matter. His stubbornness aroused Frank to inward fury.

"Won't you tell me where Butler lives? What harm can that do?" urged the young athlete.

"Wouldn't do any good, anyway," replied Simmons, positively. "What kind of games are you young fellows going to have here to-day?"

Frank realized that it would be useless to try further, at present, to make this stubborn fellow talk. So, humoring his man, our hero described the hurdle race on skates.

"Who's that fellow?" inquired the Jerseyman, as Tod Owen went swiftly by.

"That's the captain of the other club, and their best man in to-day's race.

"Can't beat him, can you?" Simmons wanted to know.

"Why, that's what we're going to find out," smiled Manley. "I've beaten him often in the past at other sports."

"You have?" inquired the Jerseyman, looking Frank over incredulously. "Why, you're nowhere near as big and powerful-looking as he is."

"Nevertheless, I've beaten him a good many times."

"If you could do it to-day I'd believe a good deal more in you," Simmons retorted, with the air of one who says: "Seeing is believing."

"If I made my brag good by beating Tod Owen, you'd have more faith in me?" persisted Manley. "You'd even be more inclined to believe in the other things I've been telling you."

"I don't know as I'll say that," hedged the Jerseyman, cautiously.

"Will you tell me one thing?" pleaded Frank. "Does Butler live in this part of the State?"

"Well, not a great big journey from here," Simmons admitted.

"And if I win this race you'll tell me where it is that Butler lives?" plumped Manley.

"That sounds safe," grinned Simmons, "for you can't win against that big fellow."

"Then you agree to tell me if I do win?"

"See here," exploded the Jerseyman, "if you make good your brag by holding your own with that big fellow, Owen, I'll tell you just where Walter Butler can be found when he's at home. But if you don't hold your own I'll leave this place and wild horses can't drag the news from me. Is that straight?"

"Straight and satisfactory. Thank you. I shall hold you to your word, Mr. Simmons!"

"Oh, I'll keep it!" replied the Jerseyman, and Frank felt sure that the only possible way of getting the coveted news was by winning the race.

Our hero looked at Dick Foster, hovering near. Dick skated over to the Jerseyman as Manley skated away.

But our hero quickly drew Hal and Joe to one side and told them the news.

"So," muttered Joe, "if you win at the new game it means a life saved."

"That's what I firmly believe," quivered Manley. "For I believe that Butler lives somewhere in this part of the State. I believe that he and Abbott, failing in secluded places, have taken their poor old victim back to Butler's home. I also believe that, presently, they mean to do away with the poor old man. If we can find out where to look for Butler we can hope to frustrate the whole wicked game. So you are right in saying that Mr. Ingram's life depends on my winning this race."

"That'll be easy," nodded Joe, coolly. "Tod Owen will do anything for you. A word to him, and he'll let you have a walkover."

"That word won't be spoken by me," Frank retorted, quietly.

"Then I'll speak to Tod myself," Joe declared.

"No, you won't. I won't have that. Fellows, there never has been a thrown race or a 'fixed' event of any kind between the two clubs. We won't begin that now. The public trusts us, and we'll have clean sport all the time."

"You won't fix things to save a life?" Joe demanded.

"Not for any purpose whatever," Frank declared, warmly. "No good ever comes out of being crooked. I hope to win to-day, but if I do it will be on my own efforts!"

"There goes the call for the racers," nodded Hal, as a whistle's blast sounded over the ice.

The cheers of the eager and impatient spectators rang out as the Up and At 'Em Boys skated briskly to the starting line.

Frank glanced at Kitty as he skated by.

That dear girl nodded at him, encouragingly, believingly, as their eyes met.

"She wouldn't have me do anything crooked, no matter how good I might think the motive to be," Frank muttered to himself.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE AGONY OF A RACE.

The contestants, eight in number, were ranged at the line. It was to be a standing start.

The crack of a pistol would put the eight young athletes in instant, swift motion.

The din of the Woodstock yell rang in the ears of the contestants.

"I hope it's an omen!" Frank smiled, anxiously. "Little those cheering people imagine what the race means to me."

Back in the teeth of Woodstock, Bradford rooters hurled their cry.

Frank's eyes sought out Kitty's eyes in the crowd. They flashed back grit and courage.

Crack! The starter's pistol had gone.

Standing strained and tensed, the young athletes now suddenly relaxed as they leaped forward.

Glide! There was a clapping of hands as sharp skates scratched softly over the keen ice.

"Two to one on Woodstock!"

"No show, with Owen in the race!"

"We'll see!"

At the first hurdle the onlookers uproariously greeted the new sport.

"If the crowd but knew that this race means not a mere victory, but a life!" groaned Frank, despairingly.

For, at the outset the day seemed against him.

Though he was but a twinkling ahead of Tod, and was the first to clear the first hurdle, yet the Bradford leader soon passed him.

At the second hurdle Tod was even further ahead.

"I've got to do something!" quivered Manley. "It's only a quarter of a mile. What does strain matter?"

With that he dashed into the race with a steam of which not even he had believed himself capable.

But, skating so madly, even a two-foot hurdle was a dangerous obstacle to clear.

At the fourth hurdle a cry of alarm went up, for Frank's left skate almost touched the hurdle rope.

He seemed about to knock the rope down, yet recovered, and rushed madly on for the fifth, which seemed but an arm's length away.

Over the sixth went Manley, just as Tod was alighting on his skates.

For the seventh hurdle it was a desperate race. Tod was but a fraction of a second ahead.

At the eighth they were all but tied.

Frank began to take heart. He had some hope of victory now.

Yet the agony of that wild race!

It was something that the onlookers could not imagine.

Tod, though skating only for victory, was in better form than ever he had been before.

His great, steel-like muscles were serving him splendidly to-day.

But the ninth hurdle they took together, and another rousing cheer went up at this close work.

All the other skaters were to the rear, Jackets being the nearest.

That little athlete had not the great muscles of either of the leaders, but he had monkey-like agility and a magnificent wind that Manley had trained.

It was a terrific spurt that Frank put on as he left the ninth hurdle.

Yet he and Tod went over the tenth absolutely together.

The din of the cheering was intense.

Manley's heart throbbed with agony.

It seemed impossible to gain an inch over his rival.

And there ahead, at the finish line, Frank caught an instant's glimpse of Simmons, surrounded by the Trouble Trio.

A superb effort by both the young athletes, and Frank and Tod rose in the air together at the eleventh and last hurdle.

They touched the ice together—a magnificent tie.

But Manley's heart was wracked with despair as the judges put their heads briefly together.

Yet, drawn irresistibly, he skated over to the easy-going Jerseyman.

To our hero's surprise, Simmons held out his hand.

"Well, you won, Manley."

"No; it was a tie," Frank confessed, honestly.

"I mean, you won on my terms."

"Why—what——"

Frank felt staggered.

"I said if you held your own with the other fellow. Well, you did, if you tied him. I'm a man of my word. Now——"

Simmons glanced at the members of the Trouble Trio.

Like one in a dream, Frank waved them away.

"I've got to tell you, now," whispered Simmons. "That was the agreement—if you held your own. Well, then, Walter Butler's home is in——"

Simmons looked around as if he were fearful of being overheard.

Then he added, cautiously:

"In Stinson."

Stinson? Why, the town was less than thirty miles to the northward of Woodstock, and on the line of railway!

"That's right, is it?" Frank asked, quiveringly.

"You don't think I'd lie to you, do you?" demanded the Jerseyman, indignantly.

"Of course not. I beg your pardon. And does Butler live right in the town?"

"I reckon not. It must be some sort of a farm. You see, Butler was pretty wild, and his stepfather, Mr. Ingram, insisted that he must go away somewhere in the country and straighten out. So Abbott sold him a place."

"Could I possibly persuade you to go there with us to-day?" throbbed Manley.

"Me? Why?"

"Well, I've an idea that Butler felt risky about having Mr. Ingram on his own place, and so brought him into this



part of the country. Now, having gotten into trouble twice around here, I believe that Butler has taken the old man back to his—Butler's—home. And I believe they'll do away with the old man mighty quick."

"Do away with Hiram Ingram? Why?" cried Simmons, unbelievably.

"Well, wasn't Butler his heir? And you say that Butler was wild? Do you suppose that Butler had been disinherited, and that he was trying to make a lunatic out of the old man in the hope of breaking the latest will?"

Simmons was utterly aghast, now, his mouth very wide open with amazement.

"And now, that they're thoroughly scared," went on Frank, "isn't it more than barely possible that they will decide to do away with the old man and dispose of his body before pursuit again gets on their track?"

"Jehosaphat!" exploded the Jerseyman.

"Do you begin to believe with me?"

"I believe that my blood has a bad case of the creeps," replied Simmons, beginning to shake with suppressed excitement.

"Manley and Owen will race back to the finish line to decide the race!" shouted the referee.

"What's that?" demanded Simmons.

"It means," smiled Frank, "that you gave me my information before I won the right to it. I may be beaten yet."

"It's lucky I did tell you," gasped the Jerseyman. "If you had been beaten you'd never have gotten a whisper out of me. I left it to the race to decide whether I should tell you. I wasn't clear in my own mind what I ought to do about it."

"Thank you, just the same," smiled Frank. "And you'll wait for me until the race is over, won't you?"

"Oh, you're not going to lose me now," the Jerseyman protested, emphatically.

Tod and Frank went back to the line.

There they "got set," awaiting the crack of the pistol. It came; they started—started in a fast and furious style.

But Manley was no longer at his best. He was trembling inwardly over the value of his new discovery.

Yet he did the best that now lay in him.

He and Tod cleared the fifth hurdle together, but Owen was just a shade in the lead at the sixth.

At the seventh the lead was greater.

Then, again, Manley put himself forth at his utmost. He gained a shade.

But at the tenth Tod was several feet ahead.

Over the eleventh they went, almost together, yet Owen was far enough ahead so that he was seen to be the winner.

It was Bradford's day, and fairly won, but Manley could not find it in his heart to be sorry.

Tod was pleased, and Manley, for a different reason, delighted.

"It was too bad," whispered Kitty, as she stepped out on the course to meet our hero.

"But I'm mighty happy, all the same."

"Why?" asked Miss Dunstan, in surprise.

"You couldn't guess——"

"But——"

"And I'm not going to tell you until a little later."

"Oh, well, I'll try to be patient," sighed Kit, comically.

"And now, dear, you won't mind if I hurry away, since you have your father and Grace with you? For I've something wonderfully important on hand."

"But to-night——"

"Hal and I will be up, if possible."

"If——"

"But the chances are all against us."

Kitty did not ask more questions. Though Manley was outwardly cool she realized that he was greatly excited over something.

"He'll tell me what it is as soon as he tells any one," she murmured to herself, and was satisfied.

Frank skated swiftly after Owen.

"Tod, do you want to go off on a trip with a few of us?"

"What's the trick?" asked Tod, curiously.

"I can't tell you now, but I think you'll be glad you went."

"Oh, it's enough, old fellow, to know that you want me to go," Tod answered. "Of course I'll go, as soon as you're ready to start."

Then, to old Hek, who joined them, Tod explained:

"Dad, I'm going off on a little jaunt with Manley."

"What kind of a jaunt?" Hek wanted to know.

"I don't know myself," Tod laughed. "No explanations have been offered."

"Oh, well, if you go off with Manley it's going to be a right kind of junket, all right," replied Hek, contentedly. "Run along!"

The word was passed swiftly to some of the Up and At 'Em Boys.

Less than an hour later Frank was on the train for Stinson.

With him were the Biff Twins, the Trouble Trio, Jackets Winston and Tod Owen—a remarkable and conquering force for any kind of an adventure.

With them was Ezra Simmons, who didn't count for as much, yet he might have his uses.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CRACK OF DOOM.

"Third farm past the mill?" mused Frank, aloud. "This must be the place. Whoa!"

He reined in the slow-moving pair of horses, bringing the long, straw-filled pung to a standstill.

The eight young athletes, having reached Stinson, had received information as to where to find the Butler place, some three miles beyond the little village.

They had elected to go out in the disguise of a straw-



ride party, leaving Mr. Simmons behind at the village hotel, for that portly individual had no apparent relish for adventure as stirring as this affair now promised to be.

"You'd better go up first, 'Tod," Frank suggested. "If you're seen you're likely to be recognized, or even suspected. With that old overcoat, cap, mittens and muffler, you'll look just like the hayseed you pretend to be."

"I reckon I can fill the job," grinned Owen.

"If you find it best to go straight to the door, you can ring and ask the way to Stinson, or any other old information that comes into your head. The main thing to make sure about is whether Abbott and Butler are there. You've got their descriptions pat?"

"So pat that I can't lose either of them," vaunted Tod.

"Then run along and good luck! If you strike anything like trouble, give a yell and we'll all pile up."

Tod jumped out, hurrying awkwardly up the long drive from the road to the house. In Owen's gait and carriage there was no suggestion of the trained athlete. He was acting his part to perfection.

"It's just the kind of a job that tickles Tod," grunted Hal.

"Anything to be with Manley," grinned Joe.

"He's a mighty handy fellow to have around when there's trouble," clicked Frank. "He's a big addition to our little force."

"What are you going to do, if we find our folks up there?" Lon Humphrey asked.

"That," said Manley, "will depend on just what we do find."

It was so dark now that they lost sight of Tod before he reached the house.

From the building there came not a ray of light.

Hal and Joe were of the opinion that the house was untenanted. Manley didn't have any opinion; he wanted information.

"Here comes Tod," Joe whispered, at last.

Vaguely defined at first, in the darkness, Tod loomed out more and more distinctly as he hurried toward the waiting pung.

"There's folks in the house," he whispered.

"But no lights?" asked Frank.

"There's light enough in the parlor, but the windows are heavily shaded," Tod reported.

"How could you see the lights, then?"

"I was in the house," Tod grinned.

"Break in?"

"Kinder. There's a little window close to the front door. I tried it and found it unfastened. After that it didn't take me long to get inside."

"You didn't see our people?" Frank demanded, eagerly.

"No; but I reckon I heard 'em."

"Talking?"

"Just that!"

"About what?"

"I didn't make a heap out of the talk," Tod went on, quickly. "But I gathered that the fellow with the softer voice——"

"That's Butler!"

"Must be. He's in a bad case of rattles and blue funk. He's afraid of trouble. He was talking of what happened at Bradford and Burbank."

"They're our people, all right, then!" Frank glowed.

"Must be. Butler is blue, and Abbott, if that's the other fellow's name, is trying to cheer him up."

"What else did you hear?"

"Didn't stop to hear any more," retorted Tod. "Thought it was time to come back."

"Is it easy work getting in through that window?"

"Won't be now," Tod grinned. "I fastened it. But I unlocked the front door and stole out that way."

"We'll all go up now," Frank decided, quietly.

He attended to securing the horses, then gave the signal to go softly up the driveway.

"Can they see us coming from inside?" Frank whispered to Tod, who was at his side.

"Not unless they leave the parlor."

"Is the door between the parlor and the hall ajar?"

"Just a crack," Tod nodded.

"It would be a huge joke, of a grim sort," Frank smiled, "if we could find Mr. Ingram and get him out of the house without being suspected."

Tod chuckled inwardly at this humorous scheme of outwitting the rascals.

But now they were close to the porch. The eight young athletes filed softly up on it.

Then, with Tod to open the door, Frank left the others behind for the present.

The door opened easily and noiselessly.

Frank followed in. Tod, with great stealth, almost closed the outer door once more.

Tod's hand gripped our hero's arm, but the signal was hardly needed, for through the open crack of the parlor door came the sound of subdued voices.

"I suppose I am a fool, as you say," Butler was saying. Manley recognized that voice in an instant. "But I can't help it. I've got a sort of superstitious dread over me. I feel as if something were going to happen. It would seem just what I am looking for if the police were to surround the house now and batter in the door."

"You have got a bad case of blues," jeered the other voice—Abbott's. "Suppose a squad of police did come here? With these two revolvers, and my quick, straight style of shooting, how many of the police would get away?"

"I wish I had your grit," sighed Butler, miserably.

"You do need some of it," came the mocking response.

"I shall never be easy as long as the old man is alive on our hands."

"Well, he doesn't need to live, does he?" came the color-blooded query.

The young listeners in the hallway fancied they could fairly see Butler shudder.

"What's the old man living for now, anyway?" went on Abbott, gruffly. "Those boys who meddled in our business stirred up things so that we can't ever produce the



old man as a finished lunatic. We don't dare to produce the dead body, either. But see here, Walter—the old man's presence is a constant source of danger to us."

"Don't I know that?" shuddered the young plotter.

"Now, if he disappeared—just vanished off the face of the earth, no one could really fasten it on us. And you've got that will that disinherited you. The first will makes you the sole heir. Now, if old papa Ingram disappears, after a while you can bob up and claim the estate, can't you?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Well?"

"What on earth do you mean?" shivered the younger man.

"Why, I'm waiting for you to get up courage enough to say the word that means the crack of doom for the old man," urged Abbott, eagerly. "The thing can be over with soon, and we can dispose of the remains so that they'll never be found. We can get out of here before midnight—be in Europe within a few days. You've got money enough for that. By and by you can come back, get charge of the estate, and then all the rest will be plain sailing. Instead of being disinherited, you'll be the owner of something more than two millions."

"Is it perfectly safe?" chattered Butler.

"As safe as anything can be. What I propose is really the safest thing now—the only thing that can put us past the chance of being followed up and fooled. Are you going to hesitate forever?"

"No!" trembled Butler.

"Then we'll go up now and have it over with soon?" asked Abbott, as coolly as if he were not suggesting the atrocious murder of a helpless, drugged old man.

"Ye-es," shuddered the younger plotter.

"Then come along!" called Abbott, almost cheerily, as he rose. "You will be surprised to see how soon and easy the thing is over!"

"But if any prowler, and meddler—and policeman——" gasped the haunted young scoundrel.

"If any one butts in I shall have this pair of big Navy revolvers in my hands—twelve lives, for I'd fire like a flash!" Abbott assured him.

Tod and Frank crouched back in the shadows as the pair came out—Butler, shrinking and afraid; Abbott, nervily erect and carrying a huge revolver in each hand.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE GAME OF "BLUFF."

Had Abbott been more fearful of meddlers, he would have looked more sharply as he stepped into the hall.

But, as it was, he had his eyes on Butler, whose greatest anxiety seemed to be to get up the stairs as quickly as possible.

Frank and Tod, therefore, escaped detection.

Yet they felt more than half "blocked."

For they realized that Abbott meant, thoroughly, to shoot if interfered with.

Manley would not run his youngsters into certain death.

As the two plotters went up the stairs, Tod looked into Manley's eyes in the gloom.

It was as if the Bradford boy were asking, dumbly:

"Can we do anything to hinder them?"

Frank did not have his own mind made up, but he would not yet admit defeat.

"I'll watch," he murmured to himself. "The cleverest scoundrels leave some hole in their plans. We'll look out for that hole!"

The two plotters reached the next floor and moved out of sight.

Then the two listeners below heard a door open and close.

"Come on," was what Manley's tug at Owen's sleeve meant.

Manley went stealthily up the stairs, Owen following with the greatest care.

"Halt!"

Click!

The first came in Abbott's gruff, deadly tones.

The second sound was caused by the cocking of a revolver.

Frank had just a moment's glimpse of the big fellow standing outside a closed door, a revolver in either hand, and one of them leveled at the young prowler's head.

"Get out of this!" roared Abbott.

But Manley needed no invitation, nor had he waited for it.

Finding the muzzle of a huge revolver staring him in the face, he turned and bolted down the stairs, Tod making fast time ahead of him.

Quick as a flash the closed door upstairs opened.

Butler's tremulous voice could be heard, asking:

"What's wrong, Abbott—oh, what is it?"

"Meddlers," the big fellow answered, gruffly.

Frank and Tod had halted at the outer door.

They yanked it open, then stood listening.

Upstairs, Abbott and Butler were talking in whispers.

"Now, there'll be something happening soon," Frank whispered. "Joe, you and Humph run out around the house. If you catch those rascals trying to leave, raise a yell, and we'll be with you. Where's Hal?"

But Hal Spofford had vanished.

"No matter," muttered Manley. "Whatever he's doing, Hal knows what he's up to."

The rest of the youngsters, now five in number, stood huddled at the outer door.

So far as Frank could see now, they could play only a waiting game.

"For those rascals upstairs won't dare carry out any scheme of murder when they know the house is surrounded," our hero confided to those around him. "For the present old Mr. Ingram is safe. The scoundrels are busy enough thinking how to get away from us."

Apparently, this problem was soon solved.



For Abbott suddenly appeared, marching steadily down the stairs, with both revolvers ready for instant use.

Just behind him came Walter Butler, bearing something that must be the form of Hiram Ingram.

Whatever it was, the form was so thoroughly wrapped as to defy identification.

"Clear the way there!" ordered Abbott, as he caught sight of the boys. "Anything that gets within forty feet of these guns is a dead one!"

"Back off!" muttered Manley.

He and his supporters retreated out into the yard.

Abbott came out unhampered, with Butler and the latter's burden just behind him.

"Keep a good distance from us—that's what you want to do!" roared Abbott. "I'm in the temper to kill some one to-night if I'm interfered with!"

He and Butler turned to walk in the direction of the barn.

Turning, the big fellow saw that the Up and At 'Em Boys were following at a respectful distance.

"Get back there!" he warned. "Do you want to be killed?"

"Bosh!" Frank bluffed back. "Do you dare to kill eight boys? Any that you didn't kill would be left as witnesses against you."

"Get close, and you'll find out what I'll do about killing!" came the threat, garnished with an oath.

But Manley persisted in following, though he kept his little squad more than sixty feet behind the fugitives.

"Unless we attack him, he won't dare shoot with so many around," Manley muttered to Tod. "Just keep a little way off and see how much he'll do."

Hal had joined the squad again. There was no time for Frank to ask explanations. Our hero had his whole mind taken up with watching the enraged, deadly Abbott.

Reaching the barn, Butler lay down his burden, while Abbott faced the youngsters and mounted guard.

"We'll soon leave you behind," announced Abbott, confidently.

A chuckle came from Hal.

Throwing open the doors, and lighting a lantern, Butler revealed a sight that made the astonished boys gasp.

There, just behind the sill, and ready to run out, stood a big touring car.

"Forty miles an hour!" Abbott condescended to announce. "Get her ready to start, my boy."

Butler, having lifted his burden and deposited it in the back of the automobile, leaped up to the chauffeur's seat.

"We'll say good-by in a minute," Abbott boasted, grimly.

But Butler, after working for a few moments, began to swear.

"There's a great smell of gasoline here, and I can't get the sparker to work!" he cried. "I believe the tank has been emptied of gasoline."

A loud laugh from Hal greeted this discovery.

Like a flash, Frank turned to his chum.

"Clever old Hal!" he murmured, squeezing Spofford's hand.

The other Up and At 'Em Boys were grinning broadly.

"So this is your work, is it?" bawled Abbott. "I'll settle him!"

"Here!" announced Hal, coolly, stepping out.

"Seven witnesses looking on at any attempt at murder," Frank announced, meaningly.

Abbott had sighted one of the weapons at Hal, but now he lowered the muzzle, with a curse.

He had not the nerve to begin shooting unless attacked.

"Come here," he called to his pal. "Take one of these guns and stand guard. Shoot the first young fool who comes near. I'll go back to the house for more gasoline."

A jeer from the onlooking boys greeted this proposition.

"Leave one of the guns with Butler," mocked Frank, "and we'll have it away from him the second your back is turned."

"They know my name!" gasped Mr. Ingram's stepson.

"Of course we do," Frank confirmed. "We know you both, and all about you. We know the whole infamous crime that you've been trying to put through. You might as well quit at once—you can't win!"

"Can't, eh?" leered Abbott. "We'll see about that!"

Yet the problem, as Manley had stated it, required some thought by the desperate big fellow.

Butler's nerve had gone all to pieces. If he were left alone, with a revolver, eight nervy boys could bluff the young scoundrel until they got near enough to rush him and take the weapon away from him.

If, on the other hand, Butler were armed with a revolver and sent to the house after the gasoline, he would be followed by some of the boys.

Taking advantage of Butler's fright and shaking nerves, the boys who followed him would undoubtedly get the revolver away from him and stop the delivery of the gasoline.

"Hitch the horse!" cried Abbott, after brief, exasperated thought.

Butler disappeared into another part of the barn, from which he wailed out:

"Some one has cut the harness to tatters!"

"Oh, you boys have been busy, haven't you?" raged Abbott.

Again the Up and At 'Em Boys turned to look, laughingly, at Hal.

But Spofford had already slipped out of the group and had vanished, sent away on an errand by Manley.

Fingering the triggers of his weapons perplexedly, Abbott at last called over his shoulder:

"Butler, get that bundle and come along with me. Be quick!"

"What——"

"Never mind asking questions. Hurry!"

Butler staggered further under the bundle, which the boys believed to be the well-wrapped form of Hiram Ingram.

"Get out of the way there, you cubs!" ordered Abbott, brandishing the revolvers as he stepped forward.

Frank and his little squad stepped back, in mocking obedience.

"It isn't necessary to keep as close as we did before."



was the word that Frank passed around. "Just keep them in sight."

The two scoundrels, hampered, made their way to the house, stepping inside.

And now Hal again joined the group, announcing:

"I didn't have time to find the gasoline, but I attended to the other matter."

A cellar bulkhead opened, a small cask being rolled quickly out.

Instantly Abbott followed the cask, mounting guard over it. Butler came into view once more, carrying his burden.

"Now, let's see how the big fellow will carry the cask and keep his pistols ready, too!" mocked Frank.

"Want to see?" jeered Abbott, roughly.

He began to kick the cask along over the ground.

Rolling it in this fashion, without the aid of his hands, which were busy with the revolvers, made slow work of the task.

"Want any help?" asked Frank, pleasantly.

"I've a good mind to make you carry that cask!" flared the big fellow.

"Oh, we'll carry it! Just ask us to!" begged Manley.

But the big fellow, again cursing, went on rolling the cask as best he could with his feet.

It was mighty slow work—and slow work, for reasons of his own, was just what Frank Manley wanted.

But after some minutes of work, punctuated by jeering sallies from the boys, who kept at a respectful distance, the cask was rolled close to the barn door.

"Put the—the bundle—back in the auto car," directed Abbott. "Then get busy with filling the tank."

The first part of his orders Butler carried out.

Then he rolled the cask into the barn, and the task of opening the cask and filling the automobile's tank went on with dragging slowness.

"You boys have made us a lot of trouble," growled Abbott, "but we beat you out after all."

"Sure!" chirped Frank, cheerfully. "That's just what we're standing around here for and freezing our tender little feet—just to see you beat us out!"

Abbott shot a suspicious, hateful look at Manley—then concluded that the young athlete was bluffing mildly.

"Can't you hurry up, lad?" demanded the big fellow.

"It's mighty slow work," faltered Butler.

"But you're beating us out—slowly!" mocked Tod, at which another laugh went up.

"Take your time," encouraged Frank. "There's really no need to hurry. We're an awfully slow lot of youngsters to beat out! You can do it while you're asleep!"

"Hold the lantern closer to the tank, and warm up the gasoline," Hal advised. "Then the stuff will flow faster."

"This is funny for you kids, ain't it?" raged Abbott.

"Of course we know it isn't such fun for you," returned Frank, politely. "Delay means prison for you. But you'll get there anyway!"

But now, Walter Butler, finishing his labors at the tank, gave his attention to the machinery.

"Jig's up!" called Frank, as a sleigh, without bells, and drawn by a steaming horse, came flying along the road and turned in at the driveway.

"What in thunder——" began the big fellow.

"Constables," Frank announced, coolly. "You forgot that your house was on the telephone circuit!"

It was this task that had occupied Hal, at Manley's order. The village authorities had been told over the wire that a crime was being committed at this farm.

"Scatter!" warned Frank, brandishing his arms at his friends as the horse and cutter, with two men inside, dashed up.

For Manley saw, clearly enough, that there would be shooting now.

"What's wrong here?" shouted one of the newcomers, as both men jumped out of the sleigh.

"Those men are trying to leave, with an old man whom they intend to murder, or have killed!" shouted Frank. "Seize them before they can get away."

"Stand back there, every one!" warned Abbott's ugly voice, as he leveled his weapons at the two constables.

The village officers were not slow in getting out their own weapons, but they hesitated about advancing.

"Officers," rang Manley's voice, "you can judge now whether they are really criminals. If you let them get away it'll be your fault. They have their poor old victim in the car with them."

"Put up those guns!" ordered the constable, who appeared to be in command. "We can't let you go from here, men, until we have looked into this matter."

"It'll cost you your lives to stop us!" roared Abbott, so firmly that the constables still hesitated.

"Back into the car!" sounded Butler's low, shaking voice.

Abbott slowly complied, all the while keeping his eyes on the two hesitating officers.

Whirr-rr! chug! chug!

Abbott was standing in the back of the car, showing but dimly in the poor light of the lantern.

"Don't start that machine!" ordered the head constable. "If you do, we'll shoot you!"

"Start!" roared Abbott, gruffly. "If they make a move to shoot I'll kill the man who does it. They don't know how to shoot, lad, and I never miss my man. Start!"

With a groan, Butler obeyed.

A hiss from the engine, and the auto rolled out of the stable.

Abbott, standing grimly erect, was ready to shoot at the first sign of open hostility.

A few yards, and the automobile gained in speed.

"You're letting 'em get away!" shouted Manley's disgusted voice.

Roused by the taunt, the head constable raised his pistol and fired after the fugitives.

In an instant the back of the auto became alive with flashes.

Crack! crack! crack!

Abbott was making good his threat to return the fire.

Nor was he wasting any shots.



Every one was fired with intent to kill.

The head constable's weapon was shot out of his hand.

Nor did the boys escape their share of attention.

Manley's cap was carried from his head by a bullet that barely escaped entering his brain.

Three or four of the boys started to run, but Manley shouted:

"Throw yourselves down on your faces!"

As he called out he followed his own advice, for the air seemed alive with bullets.

## CHAPTER XI.

### TRACKING BY UP-TO-DATE METHODS.

Toot!

The defiance came back exultantly.

By this time the automobile was far out on the road.

Traveling without lights, it was already out of sight.

"Well, you let 'em get away!" growled Manley, disgustedly.

"What could we do?" demanded one of the constables. "We tried to stop 'em."

Manley was highly disgusted with the hesitancy of the officers, but he had the sense to realize that he still needed their services.

"The scoundrels can't get away from us," he uttered, suddenly. "Come on to the house."

"What's doing?" asked the head constable.

But Manley, having formed a quick plan, did not stop to answer. He headed for the house at full speed.

"You'd better follow, if you want to see what's up," counseled Joe. "When Manley goes as fast as that it's likely to be something good."

The Up and At 'Em Boys followed at a run, in which the constables finally joined.

Those who were quick enough, found Manley in the sitting-room, standing before the telephone instrument.

"Central, if you want to help in stopping a fearful crime," he was calling, "call up all the other centrals within a dozen miles. Ask them to ask their subscribers to note whether a big Pope Toledo, going, as we believe, without lights, goes by their homes. The subscriber who sees this auto go by should notify his central at once and state the direction in which the auto went. A little co-operation between centrals and subscribers will enable us soon to locate this machine. It contains two escaping criminals who have attempted murder. In the car with them—dead or alive, we don't know which—is their victim, an old man. Now, if any subscriber reports this auto passing, and the direction, it ought to be possible to telephone ahead to officers or citizens who will head off and stop the auto, rescue the old man and capture those with him. Central, will you flash this message out over the country as fast as you can?"

There was a moment's pause, and then:

"Thank you!" Manley murmured. "I shall be right here to receive any news you get."

He hung up the receiver and turned to those who had crowded silently into the room.

"That's about as up-to-date method as we can use for tracking the rascals. Within a few minutes we ought to have news."

"Who'd ever a-thought of doing that?" cried the head constable.

"You see a telephone every day," smiled Frank. "Did you never before think of putting it to such complete use?"

"It's a new one on me."

"I hope it won't be, after this, then."

There was a fire in the sitting-room. Its warmth was welcome after so long a time in the cold outer air.

"Joe," said Frank, suddenly, "I wish you'd go down to the road and bring the horses up. We ought to have them at the door, ready to slip their blankets off at a moment's notice."

Joe soon reported that the horses were in readiness for instant use.

Five minutes later the telephone rang.

Central informed Frank that a lightless Pope Toledo had been sighted passing a house some five miles away. It was not going at full speed, on account of the condition of the roads.

"Have messages been sent ahead to intercept it?" Frank inquired, eagerly.

"Yes," came central's answer.

"We'll look for big news soon, then," was Frank's word, just before he rang off.

Every one in the room jumped when the bell tinkled next. Manley, standing by the machine, answered instantly.

"Your auto has been found," central informed him.

"And stopped?" cried Frank.

"Stopped itself. Tire exploded, and the auto is standing in the street."

"Where?" Frank fairly shouted.

"Near Brisbane, about seven miles from where you are."

"And the people in it?"

"They were jumped on by two constables and a few citizens who were waiting for them a little further up the road."

"Were the rascals caught?"

"No. Got away."

"How?"

"They opened fire on the police party and ran off in the excitement."

"But the old man?" Frank quivered.

"People near where the auto stopped have the old man—what's left of him."

"Dead?"

"Might as well be. He won't last long."

Then followed directions as to where to find the place at which the auto had broken down.

Thanking central warmly, Manley hung up the receiver.

"Well," he demanded, turning to the constables, "are you with us on this chase?"



"It's out of our village," spoke one of them, "but we'd like to see this game played through."

"Come along, then."

The lights in the house were quickly extinguished. Then the Woodstock boys and Tod climbed quickly into their pung, burrowing in the straw, while Manley brought the whip down over the horses.

The constables, who knew the road, led the way.

It was a brisk drive of more than an hour before they came in sight of the broken-down automobile.

In the nearest house they found Hiram Ingram, attended by the whole household and superintended by three doctors.

"Is he going to pull out?" asked Frank, as one of the doctors came into the hallway to see him.

"It's highly doubtful," replied the medical man.

"Has he suffered from violence?"

"No; but some strange drug has been given him. His heart-beat is very low, and death, at any minute, will not surprise us."

"It will be well worth your while to bring him through," palpitated the young athlete. "The old man is worth more than two millions."

"We'd do our best for him if he were a beggar," replied the doctor.

"Telephone to the hotel at Stinson, and it won't be long before one of the old man's best friends, a Mr. Simmons, will be here. He'll look after everything."

With that advice Frank turned, followed by Tod and the constables, and told the news to the waiting boys outside.

There was other police help at hand, too, in the shape of the Brisbane constables and the citizens who had gathered.

"What direction did the fleeing scoundrels take?" Manley wanted to know.

One of the Brisbane constables pointed out the direction.

"Could the depot be reached that way?" Frank asked, quickly.

"Yes; but it's four miles away."

"That's where you'll find your men," Frank announced. "Beaten in their game, and forced to leave the old man behind, they'll head for Canada."

"It would be a good idea to telephone ahead, then, to the point nearest the depot," suggested one of the Brisbane officers.

"A very bad idea, I should say," suggested Manley, "unless there's a train leaving soon."

"No, not for more than an hour. But why not telephone ahead?"

"The people to whom you send the message might bungle and only give Abbott and Butler warning to get away," Frank answered, thoughtfully. "Wouldn't it be better to let that rascally pair warm themselves in the depot in the hope that they'll soon be beyond pursuit?"

"Well, we'll drive over, then," the constables agreed. The citizens voted to back out of so long and cold a trip on something that was none of their affair.

"But why are you following this up so hard?" Hal asked of our hero. "The officers can attend to this."

"They might need help," Manley retorted. "Besides, I shan't feel satisfied until both Abbott and Butler are caught. Have you forgotten that scrap of the letter—'kill Manley?' I've got to see this thing through and find out what that message meant."

"But we believe the old man wrote, 'kill Manley,'" Hal objected.

"Then that makes the puzzle all the greater. I tell you, I've got to see this thing through."

The constables were already in sleighs from which bells and lights had been removed.

The Up and At 'Em pung swung into line as the start was made.

It was a hard drive, a long one and a cold one. Youngsters less enthusiastic than the breed of Woodstock and Bradford might have tired of the chase.

But at last the little country depot was sighted.

Now the horses were stopped, the investigators preferring to go forward on foot and in silence.

The depot stood in a lonesome spot, with no house, save the freight shed, nearer than an eighth of a mile.

Frank noted these surroundings, and saw also the four freight cars standing on the track.

In silence the depot was surrounded.

Then Frank and one of the constables entered. There was no one else inside.

"Fool's chase," growled the constable.

"Perhaps not," Manley retorted. "There are the freight shed and the cars yet. Fugitives from justice might prefer them to the depot while waiting for the train."

Patiently, two of the constables trudged down to the freight house to watch it, while the rest surrounded the freight cars.

Three of the cars proved to be locked. Frank and Tod advanced to the door of the last one.

"Slide the door back with me, quickly," Frank whispered.

"Then duck quickly. There may be no one there, but it won't do to take chances."

With a quick shove they forced the door back.

Inside, all was still and black.

"Nothing doing, I reckon," observed one of the constables, coming forward with his flashlight.

But there was, and in a second.

Four loud shots rang out almost simultaneously, one of the bullets wounding a constable in the hand.

Two forms leaped through the air as the investigators drew back in momentary panic.

These same two figures alighted on the ground. They were off, running like greyhounds.

"You're not going to let them get away this time, are you?" shouted Manley, as he dashed after the fugitives.

The Up and At 'Em Boys were already in motion, in chase, and the constables now joined in.

"Keep back, those who want to live!" bellowed Abbott, as he dashed down a slope.

But the pursuit kept up. The Up and At 'Em Boys were not to be eluded, now that they had armed officers back of them.



Crack! crack!

Abbott was firing over his shoulders as he ran—firing with uncommonly good effect, too, for his bullets whizzed between the pursuers.

Ahead gleamed the ice of a river.

Just before they reached the bank, Walter Butler stumbled and fell.

A yell of satisfaction went up from the pursuers.

But Abbott dodged behind a tree, waiting with his revolvers.

Frank was far in the lead in the pursuit.

As he came up, the big fellow took quick but careful aim and fired.

## CHAPTER XII.

“KILL MANLEY!”

That bullet struck!

Half dazed by the sharp blow on his head, Frank fell to the snow.

“I’ll get you now, if I never do another thing!” growled Abbott, as he sighted again at the prostrate figure.

Swish! Something flew through the air—delivered from Tod Owen’s hand.

It was a small chunk, half snow, half ice, that the Bradford athlete had snatched up from the ground and hurled.

It went with the straightness of a ball-thrower’s delivery.

Just as Abbott peered out from behind the tree to aim, the missile struck him squarely in the face.

It did not hurt him much, but it spoiled the scoundrel’s aim.

There was a report, and then, finding himself in danger of being hemmed in by the advancing pursuers, Abbott turned and darted for the ice after Walter Butler, who had risen and ran again.

It was time for the fugitives to put forth their best speed, for the officers, now warming to the chase, were firing fast after their intended prisoners.

Not stopping to fire, Abbott now dashed madly forward, trying to overtake Butler, who had had a good start.

Out near the middle of the river lay a darker streak, but neither of the headlong fugitives saw it until too late.

First, Butler, with a shriek, plunged into the black, open water!

He disappeared from the surface.

Right on his heels, and glancing backward over one shoulder, came the big fellow.

He heard the shriek, the splash, but it was too late to turn or to stop.

Down into the water and under it plunged Abbott.

Nor was there any sign of them when the pursuers, dashing up, came to a startled stop.

The strip of open water was not more than a hundred feet in length, and but a few feet wide.

Quickly the young athletes spread around the open space, as intent now on rescue as they had been on capture but a few moments before.

“Watch for them!” called Manley. “If a head shows, jump in and help!”

But the moments went by, and the only ripples on the water were those stirred by the wind.

A shudder passed through the little group of watchers.

Manley watched the swift current of the water, then shook his head.

“In that swift stream,” he murmured, “they’ve got away for good and all. They’ve gotten away even from themselves at last!”

But they lingered, on the bare hope that one of the fugitives might at last reappear above the water, battling and calling for help.

When fifteen minutes had gone by, however, with no such sign, the last of the watchers knew that it was useless to wait longer.

“If those fellows sinned,” pronounced one of the constables, “they’ve paid for it, and paid the highest price!”

There was nothing left to do but to return to the sleighs and go back to Brisbane.

And now, for the first time in all the excitement, Frank became aware that a warm stream was trickling down over his face.

“Why, you’ve been hit!” cried Hal, in consternation.

“I believe I was,” said Frank, coolly. “It was when I went down before the tree. But I seem to be alive and moving yet.”

“Stop your nonsense!” ordered Hal. “Stand still and let me see what happened.”

He removed Manley’s cap, carefully. Our hero’s hair was wet and matted with blood.

“Come on up to the depot, and you can get a better look, if you want one,” Frank hinted.

They turned in there, where it was light and warm.

An examination showed that the bullet had plowed Frank’s scalp, removing quite a bit of skin, but apparently not touching the skull.

Hal was for calling in a doctor at once. Frank was for getting back to Brisbane, and the latter had his way.

So the wound was washed and bound, and then the start was made for the house in which they had left old Mr. Ingram.

“I believe, Tod,” cried Frank, regretfully, “that I forgot to thank you for that snowball, or whatever it was. But I do thank you. I can still see the evil gleam in that fellow’s eyes as he sighted for the next shot at me.”

“I didn’t have time to think,” Tod admitted. “I stooped and got that chunk of ice on the spur of the moment.”

“And Abbott got it on his block,” laughed Humphrey, slangily.

Foster, Cranston and Lucas were inclined to be dory on that long ride back. The Trouble Trio had had a day full of troubles.



Frank, though silent, was reflecting in lively fashion.

"Kill Manley?" he repeated to himself. "I'm no nearer than I was before to knowing why I was picked out for death. 'Kill Manley.' If Mr. Ingram dies, I shall never know the answer to the riddle. Who planned to kill me—and why?"

Nothing that he had learned in this week of mystery and excitement had thrown any light on the puzzle.

Why should any one of these three people, of whom he had never heard before, have had any interest in his death?

"I shall feel it as a personal loss if that old man doesn't live long enough to answer the conundrum," Frank reflected.

At last they reached the little cottage in Brisbane in which old Mr. Ingram lay.

There was a sleigh before the door.

"Mr. Simmons has just arrived," one of the doctors explained to Frank, as the Up and At 'Em Boys gathered in the little dining-room in silence.

"He's convinced, then, that the man is his Mr. Ingram?" Frank inquired.

"Yes; and I never saw a man more astonished than this same Mr. Simmons."

"And your patient?"

"We've brought Mr. Ingram out of his trance, though he's still very weak. He and Simmons are now talking over the puzzle of this whole affair."

"Talking about it?" echoed Manley. "Then can I have about one minute's talk with Mr. Ingram on the same subject?"

"If you don't excite him too much—yes."

"I won't excite him," Frank promised. "I'm the one that's excited."

The doctor led our hero upstairs to the sick-room, where Simmons sat beside the old man's bed.

"You're just the youth Mr. Ingram wants to see!" cried Simmons, eagerly, as Frank and the doctor entered and closed the door behind them. "My friend wants to thank you for getting this whole thing straightened out."

"Yes, I do," came weakly from the old man, who now sat slightly propped against the pillows. "It is impossible for me to imagine how you, Master Manley, ever learned enough about my affairs to come to my rescue in this matter."

"You see," broke in Simmons, by way of explanation, "Mr. Ingram had been abroad, as I told you. He returned to this country, just after writing me that last letter. He came back without announcement, but encountered his stepson in New York. Mr. Ingram was broken in health, and Walter Butler, who had always been an ingrate, pretended to be suddenly devoted. He lured his stepfather into the country on a pretence of taking him to a sanitarium. Instead, he and Abbott got hold of the old man, brought in a fake doctor and persuaded Mr. Ingram that his mind was wandering. They took him, first of all, to Butler's farm. Then, as if afraid to carry out their plan there they coaxed Mr. Ingram to that Bradford place. On their way they

drove through Woodstock, where Mr. Ingram mailed some letters."

"Where Mr. Ingram thought he mailed some letters," Frank corrected. "Abbott went back to the postmaster and got the letters from him."

"And I trusted that scoundrel Abbott!" sighed the old man. "Now, I understand why I never heard from the friends to whom I wrote."

"Is this some of your writing?" asked Frank, holding out the scrap of a letter that had brought so much of a puzzle to him.

"Yes," the old man admitted, slowly.

"Then, on the other side," hinted Manley, turning the scrap of paper over, "you will find the letters that spell 'kill Manle.' With one more letter that would spell 'kill Manley,' which latter is my name. Now, will you tell me why I was to be killed?"

But Hiram Ingram was still staring at the scrap of paper in his hand.

"This bit of paper," said the old man, slowly, "was from a letter that I wrote my lawyer in New York. I asked him to come to see me in Bradford last Monday. I also asked him to cable Dr. Kratz, the great specialist in diseases of the mind, asking Dr. Kratz to cross the ocean and see what he could do for my case."

"But what about that apparent reference to killing me?" Frank insisted, gently.

"There was nothing about that in my letter," answered the old man, slowly. "I merely asked my lawyer to cable to Dr. Kratz at Kaaterskill Manlech, Holland."

"Kaaterskill Manlech! Kill Manle!" throbbed Frank, full light now rushing in on him.

He felt staggered for a moment, then smiled grimly.

"What a great bugaboo we youngsters worked out for ourselves!" he laughed. "But I'm glad we got it wrong, Mr. Ingram, or we would never have heard of you and your distress! We thought some one was after my life, and we set out to find out who it was. A lucky delusion!"

Yet the whole thing now seemed so absurd that our hero had a hard time to keep from laughing outright.

Here Mr. Simmons again took up the thread of the story.

"You were right, Manley, in the theory you outlined to me about the intentions of Abbott and Butler. There was an old will in which all Mr. Ingram's fortune was left to Butler. The scoundrels got hold of the disinheriting will, so that they could destroy it if they wished. They have deliberately preyed upon my old friend's mind with a view to making him insane, so that they could later dispute any recent will on the ground that Mr. Ingram was insane. But I believe that their plans were still unsettled whether to go on trying to make a lunatic of my friend, or whether they had about decided to kill him and trusting to there being no other late will than the one they had secured. In that case, young Butler would have had the whole fortune."

"Walter Butler shall never have another penny of my money!" cried the old man, fiercely.

"I guess he won't," Manley muttered to himself, with a shuddering recollection of the river tragedy.



"Have the rascals been caught?" asked Mr. Ingram.

"Not yet," Frank replied, evasively.

"Poor Walter, after all!" sighed the old man. "I am sorry for him, even though I am through with him forever. His mother was a noble woman."

"I am not going to excite you by remaining here longer to talk to you to-night, sir," said Manley, moving toward the door. "But I hope earnestly for your very speedy recovery."

"Come close a moment and let me take your hand," begged the old man, and our hero obeyed.

"What is your name?"

"Frank Manley, sir."

"Frank, I shall never forget you for all the great good you have done for me. Nor shall I forget the other boys who have helped you. If you ever need a friend—if you ever wish help—come to me first—that applies, as well, to the other boys who have helped you in saving me. Thank them for me, and give them my message. If I live long, I shall prove my gratitude to you all. You will hear from me later on—be sure of that."

And hear they did, though not during the next few weeks. For old Hiram Ingram had a long battle for life.

His health, shattered by the fearful treatment he had received, was long in rallying from the shock.

There can be no doubt that both Abbott and Butler lost their lives in the swiftly moving river. They were never heard from again.

Before he left the house Frank had his scalp wound attended to by one of the doctors.

It was not a dangerous injury, but the scalp was sore and tender for days afterward.

There was still another long, cold drive to be had back to Stinson.

On a late train that night the youngsters returned to Woodstock.

There was no way for Tod to get back to Bradford, except by walking or skating, and he was too tired to do either.

"Why, you'll come home and stop with me to-night," invited Frank. "If your father is still up you can telephone him where you are."

"That'll suit dad all right," laughed Tod. "The nearer I am to Frank Manley, the better he always likes it."

"You were near enough to-night," laughed Frank.

"And mighty glad I am that you asked me to go along. A night like to-night, while tiring, still stirs one's blood up in a way that does a fellow good."

"If he doesn't come to harm," amended Hal, soberly. "I can still hear bullets whistling."

"You carry off the honors, old fellow, for to-night," Frank broke in, earnestly. "If it hadn't been for your bright scheme of getting into the stable and crippling transportation, that auto might have gotten so far off that we couldn't have reached it again."

The talk broke up at the corner of Frank's street. After hearty, even if tired "good nights" the other youngsters

plodded homeward, while Frank and Tod walked briskly along almost in silence.

Mrs. Manley was still up, awaiting her son.

Though her manner was calm, and she asked no questions, Frank knew that his mother had been uneasy over his absence.

"I'll have something to tell you to-morrow, mother," Frank announced, smilingly.

"There's some one who has something to tell you, now," replied Mrs. Manley.

"Who? You, mother?"

"Miss Dunstan has telephoned that she is uneasy, and that she is remaining up, waiting to talk to you over the telephone."

Frank hurried into another room to the instrument.

"So you're safe home?" demanded Kitty, when Frank had called her.

"Yes; did you think I wouldn't be?"

"I know that it was a very lonesome evening that Grace and I had," came the reproachful answer. "We had been expecting company."

"But Hal and I have been miles away, and we really couldn't help it."

"Chasing more trouble?"

"Well, the Trouble Trio was with us, and the Biff Twins, too."

"Have you been running into any more risks, dear?" came the anxious question over the wire.

"Not much in the way of risks."

"Honest injun, Frank?"

"Well, I believe some of the fellows did complain that they came near being frozen," laughed the young man.

"Am I to hear all about what you did to-night? Say, to-morrow?" insisted Kitty.

"Yes—if you want."

"All right, then. To-morrow! Good night, dear!"

"Good night, dear girl!"

THE END.

Did you ever read a whole book, full from cover to cover with exciting incidents of coasting? "Physical Director" has written a wonderful story on coasting, under the title, "FRANK MANLEY'S BIG MISTAKE: OR, THE FEARFUL CRASH AT BRADFORD." It will be published complete in No. 23 of "Frank Manley's Weekly," out next week. A better or more exciting story of sport you never read. Don't miss it!

SPECIAL NOTICE: All back numbers of this weekly are always in print. If you cannot obtain them from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 21 UNION SQUARE, NEW YORK, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.



## PRACTICAL TALKS ON TRAINING

By "Physical Director"

No. 54.

Just a word, in beginning, about the sport described this week.

Real, jolly outdoor winter sports are so few in number that young athletes are always glad of an addition to the number.

In racing over hurdles on skates, you will find a great addition to your list of winter sports.

To do this fast and well, and over hurdles fairly high, requires a goodish bit of practice.

It is a sport that develops nerve, but the boy who has no nerve to start with will do well to keep away from this sport.

Have you ever tried any real jumping while on skates?

It is easy enough to jump a few inches and come down again on your runners.

To jump a real foot and a half, however, and come down on your runners with safety, is not quite as simple as it seems.

By all means, go in for this sport. Try it, keep at it, and perfect yourself in it. Yet be careful to acquire this style of feat by degrees.

First of all, practice jumping while skating without trying to go over any hurdles.

At first it is enough to jump a very few inches. Gradually, however, increase the height of the jump.

When you are satisfied, however, that you can jump fairly well on skates without a hurdle, then try it with the hurdle.

At first, though, be sure to have the hurdle a very low one.

Don't attempt, either, to master this sport in a day or two. Take time to accustom your muscles to this new style of performance.

An average boy of sixteen or seventeen should be able, after a while, to jump over two-foot hurdles while skating in a race. The best distance between hurdles is forty yards. Skating rapidly, you will find yourself coming to a new hurdle quite as soon as you are ready for it.

Boys of eleven or twelve should not attempt, ordinarily, to use a hurdle more than a foot high.

Have you any notion what a "facer" you can give a rival athletic club if you, first of all, make yourselves skillful at hurdling on skates, and then challenge a club that hasn't tried it?

The other club will have to do a lot of hurried practice before the day set for the race, and simply won't be "in it"

with a club that has been at work at this style of race for a fortnight.

Of course, it really isn't fair to take advantage of another club, but it does well enough once for a joke.

And now, for another topic.

Many young readers are again writing me, asking me just what apparatus is necessary for a new junior athletic club.

The most necessary things are Indian clubs and dumbbells, a horizontal bar, a punching-bag and a wrestling mat.

These are the most-needed things if you want to start a club gym with "store" apparatus.

But there are many boys to whom "store" apparatus, to any extent, is an impossibility.

You can have a bully, first-rate club without buying a particle of apparatus—a club in which all of you can develop yourselves as athletes of high grade.

How? Simply go to work and rig up the appliances described in the first fifteen numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly. These appliances are all such as any boys can make for themselves.

Full directions for using this home-made apparatus are given, along with the descriptions.

Do you realize that in these first fifteen numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly a complete system of athletic training is laid down? It was gotten up for YOU, and with this home-made apparatus you can launch a successful junior athletic club without having anything in the treasury.

Just look back over those first fifteen numbers and see what a wonderful system it is for building up all parts of the body! If there are any of these numbers that you don't possess, you can quickly get them by sending five cents for each number to Frank Tousey, 24 Union Square, New York City.

With this home-made apparatus, any junior club can provide all the exercise that its members need or can take.

There are a great many exercises—more than you can possibly go through in one day.

The way to use these exercises is to select a few for each day, changing daily, and thus keeping an interesting variety before the members of your club.

With this system of training, as laid down in the first fifteen numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly, you can broaden the shoulders, expand the chest, toughen the neck, build on strong, true, servicable muscles and develop wonderfully good wind.

You can harden yourselves, train yourselves against fatigue, build up your height and increase weight.

In the original directions given with this splendid system, all of the apparatus was intended to be used outdoors.

Yet all of this apparatus can be rigged for use indoors.

Exercise indoors when you must, but take your exercise outdoors all you can.

At this time of the year half an hour's lively exercise in the open air is worth an hour of the same work indoors.

Fact!



# Letters from Readers

**NOTICE.**—Write letters for this page on only one side of the paper. Number your questions. Do not ask questions on the same paper containing mail orders. Immediate answers cannot be given, as "Frank Manley's Weekly" is printed several weeks ahead of the date of issue. Address all questions for this department to "Physical Director," No. 24 Union Square, New York.

Lost Angeles, Cal., Oct. 6, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

After reading all of The Young Athlete's Weekly, I am now reading Frank Manley's Weekly. It is the best article of its kind I ever knew of, and I represent it to all American boys as the leading article. Frank, Hal and Joe are all-around good fellows, and little Jackets is certainly a crackerjack. Here are my measurements: Age 17, height 5 feet 5 inches, weight 122 pounds, neck 14 inches, shoulder 18 inches, chest contracted 31½ inches, normal 34 inches, expanded 35 inches, waist 27 inches, right forearm 9¼ inches, left 9½ inches, wrist 6 inches, ankle 7½ inches. (1) How are my measurements? (2) Where are my weak points, and how can I improve them? Thanking you in advance, I remain one of Manley's true friends. Three cheers and good luck to the Up and At 'Em Boys of Woodstock.

A. M. McLaughlin.

The only flaw in your measurements is in chest expansion. Go in strongly for Frank Manley's breathing drill as explained in No. 29 of The Young Athlete's Weekly.

Sanford, Fla., Oct. 8, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Having read a good many of The Young Athlete's Weekly, and all of the Frank Manley's, I take the liberty to ask you a few questions. My measurements are: Chest normal 33 inches, expanded 36½ inches, neck 14 inches, thigh 20 inches, biceps 12 inches, forearm 10½ inches, wrist 7 inches, calf 13 inches, ankle 12 inches, hips 36½ inches, age 13 years 6 months, height 5 feet 5½ inches, weight 120 pounds. (1) How are my measurements? (2) What are my weak points? (3) To what part of athletics am I best adapted? (4) How can I strengthen my weak points? I think Frank Manley's Weekly one of the best published, and would not miss a number for anything. Wishing long life to the writer and publisher, I remain,

A Floridian.

You are a young giant at your age, and without weak points. You should be good in any branch of athletics that appeals to you.

Vallejo, Cal., Oct. 5, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

This makes the second time that I have written to you. Please compare the measurements and see if I have made many improvements. Here they are: Age 14 years, weight 96½ pounds, height 5 feet 2½ inches, neck 12 inches, chest normal 28 inches, expanded 31 inches, waist 26½ inches, thighs 16½ inches, calves 11½ inches, left biceps horizontal 7¼ inches, right 8 inches, wrist 6 inches. I have been in training two months now. I can do the half mile in 2:35. (1) Is this good? Recently I ran in a field day meet and came in third without spikes. I can run two miles without being winded, and I hope to be able soon to do five miles. I want to ask a few questions on food: (1) Are tomatoes good? (2) Is ice-cream soda good? (3) Pie is not worse than white bread, is it? I like the change in the name of the weekly very much. The stories seem to be more interesting. While playing football I hurt my knee-cap, and now I cannot put any strain on the leg without it paining me. Can you tell me what is the matter with it? Hoping this reaches the waste-basket, I remain,

Yours truly,

Harold Fielder.

Measurements fairly good, except waist too large and calf a trifle thin. (1) Yes. (2) Not harmful unless taken in excess. (3) Both bad.

Your knee has not yet recovered from the injury. It will be necessary to take good care of it, exercising it lightly and giving it plenty of rubbing with witch-hazel.

New Albany, Pa., Oct. 12, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read all the numbers of your weekly and think they are simply great. They have done me a great deal of good, and I hope they will continue to do so. Following are my measurements: Age 15 years 6 months, height 5 feet 1 inch, weight 106 pounds, ankle 8¼ inches, calf 12½ inches, knee 13 inches, thigh 18¼ inches, around hips 31½ inches, waist 27 inches, chest normal 29½ inches, expanded 33 5-8 inches, across shoulders 15¼ inches, around shoulders 34¼ inches, neck 13¼ inches, biceps normal 9 inches, expanded 10 inches, elbow 9 inches, forearm 9 inches, wrist 6 inches. (1) How are my measurements? I run about a mile nearly every morning, half of it up hill. I exercise about twenty minutes with two-pound dumbbells and Indian clubs, interspersed with bending exercises and Frank Manley's breathing drill. (2) What are my defects? (3) Is canned fruit healthy? I do not eat very much pastry, drink lots of water, and eat a great deal of fruit. I drink no beverages with my meals, nor for half an hour before or afterward. I generally go to bed at 9:30 and rise at 6 or 6:30. (4) Is this all right? I play all kinds of outdoor sports and walk a great deal. (5) Do you think I take enough exercise? (6) Should I keep up my running when snow comes? I can throw a 28½-pound weight 15 feet 6 inches. (7) Is that good? Thanking you in advance, and hoping to see this in print soon, I will close.

A Young Athlete.

(1) Measurements good, except waist is too large; neck and chest very good. (2) None, except the waist. (3) Canned fruit will do when fresh fruits cannot be had. (4) Your plan of living is excellent. (5) Yes. (6) Yes, or substitute skating. (7) Very good.

Pittsburg, Pa., Oct. 11, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read all of the numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly, and think it is the best published. I would like to have you answer the following questions: (1) I am 14 years 10 months old, 5 feet 3½ inches tall, and weigh 128 pounds. Am I too heavy for my age? If so, how can I reduce weight? (2) I do bag punching every day, and exercise with 5-pound dumbbells morning and night for about 10 minutes. I can lift eighty pounds over my head seven times. How is that? Wishing you success, I remain

A. Skipper.

Very heavy. You can lose weight only by dieting and training down with lots of brisk exercise. Your weight-lifting is good, but I advise more of the light, brisk work, instead.

Pine Bluff, Ark., Oct. 10, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

As I have read all of your weeklies up to date, I take the liberty of asking you your opinion of my measurements, which are as follows: Age 15 years 5 months, weight 125 pounds, height 5 feet 6 inches, neck 14 1-8 inches, chest normal 33 inches, chest expanded 35½ inches, across shoulders 18 inches, reach 70 inches, around shoulders 41 inches, waist 28 inches, biceps normal 10 inches, expanded 11½ inches, forearm 10 inches, wrist 6¼ inches, hips 35¼ inches, thigh 19½ inches, calves 13¼ inches, ankle 9¼ inches. I ride a bicycle a good deal and take plenty of other exercise. (1) I can

make a mile in 3:40 on a bicycle. Is that good? What is the world's record for one mile? I can run five miles on foot without straining myself. (2) What am I built for? (3) How are my measurements for my age? Hoping to see this in print soon, I remain, an ardent reader of the king of weeklies—Frank Manley's.

Y. M. C. A.

Measurements good, except as to chest expansion. World's record bicycle mile is 1:13 against time, and 1:24 2-5 in competition, for amateurs. For professionals, the best record against time is 1:06 1-5, and in competition 1:09 1-5. I judge that you are best fitted for track work.

Washington, D. C., Oct. 14, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read Frank Manley's Weekly, and like it better than the other libraries. And now I wish to ask you a few questions, which you so kindly promise to answer in this weekly. I am a boy 16 years old, height 5 feet 8 inches, chest normal 31 inches, expanded 33 inches, waist 29 inches, weight 108 pounds. I have been taking deep breathing for the past month for the purpose of helping a growth in my nose. Can you advise any method by which I might add to my weight, as I am almost a walking skeleton now. I shall look eagerly forward to the next week's publication of Frank Manley's Weekly, in which I hope to see my questions answered.

Yours truly,

Charles Henderson.

Your measurements, as you are aware, are very slight. Very thorough chewing of food, no beverages with meals, but plenty of water between meals and brisk outdoor exercise will help you to put on weight. Keep on with the deep breathing, as your chest expansion is not good.

Newark, N. J., Oct. 15, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

As I am a constant reader of your weekly, I would like to have you answer me these questions. I am 14 years old, pretty strong, and I know how to fight good. But when a boy wants me to fight with him, and I scrap in anger, I lose my nerve and get very excited and refuse to fight. That makes me feel like a coward. Please tell me how to improve in my nerve. Please answer as soon as possible. From

Your Best Reader.

It will be necessary for you to cultivate coolness, and one way of doing this is to keep yourself in the best condition, ready for trouble, yet avoiding all unnecessary fights. It is worse to lose your head than to lose a fight.

Philadelphia, Oct. 15, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Being a reader of your valuable weekly, I take the privilege of asking you a few questions. I am 13 years 10 months old, weight 89 pounds, height 4 feet 9½ inches, waist 26¼ inches, chest normal 28½ inches, expanded 30¼ inches, thigh 17½ inches, across shoulder 17 inches, arms 21 inches, biceps 5½ inches, wrist 5¼ inches, neck 12 inches. I can chin myself eight times with both hands, and five times with one hand. (1) What are my weak and strong points? (2) What should I do for my wind, as it is very bad? (3) What would be the best exercise for my abdominal muscles? (4) Are 3-pound dumbbells good for a beginner? Hoping this will not go in the waste-basket, I remain,

A Constant Reader from Quakertown.

(1) Measurements are fairly good, but you have too much waistline. (2) Deep breathing and distance running at a slow jog. (3) Exercises described in Nos. 28 and 32 of The Young Athlete's Weekly. (4) Of course.

Toronto, Ont., Can., Oct. 10, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

The following are my measurements: Chest contracted 24¼ inches, normal 28½ inches, expanded 28 inches, neck 12 inches, weight 79 pounds, wrist 6 inches, thigh 19¼ inches, waist 21 inches, calf 11 inches, biceps normal 7¼ inches, expanded 8¼ inches, forearm 8 inches, shoulders 14 inches, height 4 feet 5 inches, age 14 years 8 months. (1) How are my measurements? (2) What are my weak and strong points? I have



read all your weeklies and have improved since following the advice in them. (3) What kind of athletics am I fit for? I work from 8 o'clock till 6.

Yours truly,

R. W. P.

(1 and 3) Measurements good, except that calf is a little thin. (3) Would advise you to go in for all-round gymnastics until you develop a specialty.

West Orange, N. J., Oct. 16, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Being that I am a reader of Frank Manley's Weekly, and other weeklies, I am happy to say that yours is the best I have read yet. But now I take the pleasure of asking you a few questions. I am 16 years 5 months old, weight 132 pounds, neck 13½ inches, chest normal 32 inches, expanded 36 inches, wrist 6½ inches, waist 29 inches, hips 34 inches, thighs 18¾ inches, calf 14 inches, ankles 8 inches, around shoulders 16½ inches, knees 13¾ inches, across shoulders 18 inches. I am at the carpenter trade. Do you think I have any good measurements? Hoping this will escape the waste-basket, I will be pleased to find my answer published soon. I am a great admirer of Jackets. I remain,

Yours truly, John F. Bonnell.

333 Valley road.

You have good chest expansion, and I imagine that your measurements are very good; but as you do not state your height I am not able to give an exact opinion.

Fond du Lac, Wis., Oct. 15, 1905.

I have read all the numbers of your weekly, and think they are splendid. I have followed your Talks on Training, and am beginning to feel like living. I am 4 feet 11 inches in height, weight 85 pounds in street clothes. We have organized a club and wish to ask you how to develop the muscle of the arm for hard hitting in boxing. How is my weight, compared to my height? I will close, wishing success to you and Frank Tousey.

Ray Roth.

183 Park avenue.

Your weight is well proportioned to your height. The biceps muscle on the upper side of the arm is used in drawing the fist toward the shoulder. The triceps, on the under side of the arm, is used in hitting. It is developed by bag punching, boxing, and the Manley drills of throwing the sand bags.

Columbia, S. C., Oct. 15, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have been reading your weekly ever since it first started under the name of The Young Athlete's Weekly. Seeing a correspondence column in the back, where you give advice to boys, I take the liberty to ask a few questions. (1) What is the best and quickest exercise for the enlargement of the wrist? (2) Does rowing broaden the shoulders? (3) How can I gain a few pounds? (4) Is chinning the quickest way to develop the biceps? (5) Where can I get a reliable book on jiu-jitsu? Hoping to see this in print, I remain,

Yours truly,

Robt. Dupre.

Rowing, either in a boat or on a machine, is one; all exercises that keep the wrists turning quickly are good for their muscular development. (2) Yes. (3) By chewing your food carefully, drinking no beverages with meals, but plenty of water between meals, and by exercising in the open air. (4) Chinning is useful for part of the work, but you should not try to develop too quickly; if you do, you will have stiff muscles and a tendency toward becoming muscle-bound. (5) Your bookseller will tell you.

Manchester, N. H., Oct. 16, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Having read some of your weeklies, I ask your opinion of my measurements. Age 15 years 6 months, weight 127 pounds, height 5 feet 3¼ inches, neck 13 inches, shoulders 14 inches, chest contracted 21 inches, normal 23 inches, expanded 25½ inches, biceps normal 9¼ inches, flexed 11¼ inches, forearm 19 inches, wrist 7 inches, waist 28 inches, thigh 20 inches, calf 13½ inches, ankle 2½ inches. (1) Where are my weak points and my strong ones? (2) How can I strengthen my weak points? (3) Which position is best for

me on a baseball team? I have played pitcher and come out all right. (4) Ought a boy with my measurements to lift more than fifty pounds from the ground straight up over the shoulder with one hand? (5) Does it do any good to take in deep breaths and hold them, and at the same time exercise? Does one cup of cocoa after breakfast make the blood good? Hoping to see this in print, I remain,

A Hard Worker, S. S.

(1) You are of very solid build, but need more chest expansion. (2) By deep breathing drill explained in No. 29 of The Young Athlete's Weekly. (3) Then why not stick at pitching? You appear to have the arm for it. (4) Am not a believer in much lifting of heavy weights, nor do I believe in exercising while holding the breath. Cocoa has no value in making the blood better.

Waltham, Mass., Oct. 16, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I think Frank Manley's Weekly contains very good stories. Myself and a chum of mine eagerly wait for Friday to come, and then we go and get our books. We always guess what the picture will be; but sometimes he gets it right, and sometimes I do. Can you tell me how to get strong, if you have not got any gymnasium at home to use? When I run my side aches; I don't run so far next time, but still it aches. How can I stop this? Now I will close. I am an eager reader of your weekly.

Frank Dickson.

Make your own gymnastic apparatus, as explained in the first fifteen numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly. The pain in the side will gradually disappear if you keep steadily and moderately at running. That pain is caused by shortness of wind and weak muscles.

Yonkers, N. Y., October 16, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Having been a constant reader of Frank Manley's Weekly since the first number I take the privilege of asking your advice. I am training for a 10-mile run. (1) What distance should I go when training? (2) Is running after dark any good? (3) How many hours after supper should I rest before running? My records are as follows: 880 yards, 2.09; 2-mile, 10.33 2-5 seconds; 4½-mile, 21.21 seconds. (4) How are these? You got my measurements before and answered them. Hoping you will excuse my long letter I will now close with my best wishes to the success of your work.

Michael Driscoll.

(1) Run varying distances on different days, both over and under ten miles. (2) Better by far than none. (3) An hour and a half to two hours. (4) Good, but not really fast. You should get the half-mile down to 2.02, anyway.

Halifax, N. S., Oct. 17, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read all your weeklies, and think they are great. Here are my age and measurements: Age, 10 years; height, 4 feet 6 inches; calf, 9½ inches; waist, 22½ inches; biceps, normal 7 inches; expanded, 8 inches; chest, normal, 23 inches; expanded, 25 inches; wrist, 5 inches; neck, 10 inches. Here are some of my records: Running broad jump, 8 feet 4 inches; standing broad jump, 5 feet 5 inches; 100 yard dash, 15 seconds. (1) How are my measurements and records? (2) What kind of apparatus should I get first to start a club? Now I will close with three cheers for Frank Manley. Yours truly,

H. Brennan.

(1) Measurements and records very good for a boy of your age and height, but always keep in mind the increasing of chest expansion as you grow. (2) For apparatus that costs you practically nothing study the Manley bag drills and the tricks of the "home-made boy," as explained in the first 15 numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly.

Wilmington, Del., Oct. 17, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Being a great admirer of your weekly, I take the liberty of asking you for advice. I have been in very bad health for the past three years, having trouble with my lungs and having a weak heart, and at present have no strength whatever. Can you put me on the road to health? My age is 19 years 3 months, and I weigh 132 pounds. (1) How is my weight? (2) Would dumbbells

and Indian clubs help me any, and what weights should I start with? (3) What is the best cure for indigestion? (4) Will you kindly tell me what course of exercises I should start with? Thanking you in advance, I remain,

Yours truly,

Edward Milton.

(1) Can't say without knowing your height. (2) Yes, and every other form of exercise outdoors. Two-pound bells and clubs are heavy enough. (3) Chew your food to a fine pulp before swallowing, drink no beverages with meals, but plenty of water between meals. (4) Study all the exercises in the first fifteen numbers of Frank Manley's Weekly. Your case is easily understood. You are eating hastily and doing without exercise or enough time spent outdoors. Go in for deep breathing drills to develop your lungs and always sleep with a window a little open, even in the coldest weather.

Saylesville, R. I., Oct. 16, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

I have read The Young Athlete's Weekly ever since it first came out and would not miss one for a farm. I think they are just great and every boy ought to read them. Now I would like to ask you what you think about my measurements. Age, 18 years 10 months; weight, stripped, 110 pounds; height, 5 feet 3½ inches; breadth of shoulders, 16 inches; chest, normal, 28 inches; chest, expanded, 30 inches; waist, 29 inches; right forearm, 9 3-8 inches; left forearm, 10 1-8 inches; right upper arm, 10 inches; left upper arm, 10½ inches; right arm up, 11 3-8 inches; left arm up, 11¼ inches; right calf, 12¾ inches; left calf, 13½ inches; right thigh, 18 3-8 inches; left thigh, 19 3-8 inches; left and right ankles, 9 and 8 7-8 inches; left and right wrists, 6¼ and 7 inches.

An Urgent Reader.

You are a few pounds under weight, have too much waist line, and need an inch and a half more chest expansion. I do not understand why your right and left measurements vary so much. You should exercise both sides of your body equally, in order that you may be of symmetrical figure.

Montpelier, Vt., Oct. 19, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Having read your king of weeklies from No. 1 up to date, I think Frank Manley and his Up-and-at-'Em Boys are all right. I take the liberty to ask a few questions. Here are my measurements. Age, 17; height, 5 feet 5¾ inches; weight, 123 pounds; left and right biceps, 9 inches; flexed, 10½ inches; neck, 13½ inches; around shoulders, 36 inches; chest normal, 32 inches; expanded, 34 inches; waist, 30 inches; hips, 33 1-3 inches; right and left thigh, 18 inches; calf, 13 inches; ankle, 9 inches; wrist, 6½ inches. (1) Are my measurements good for a boy of my age? (2) What are my weak points? (3) How can I remedy them? We have a boys' club called the Montpelier Junior Athletic Club, which has 15 members. All are good boy athletes. (4) What is the best thing to stop sweating feet? Hoping to see this in print, I remain, yours truly,

A Would-be Frank Manley,

Captain Montpelier Jr. Athletic Club.

(1) In general highly satisfactory. (2 and 3) You need an inch and a half more chest expansion, and less waist line. Secure the former by deep breathing drills, and the latter by the abdominal exercises in Nos. 28 and 32 of The Young Athlete's Weekly. (4) Daily exercise and bathing, with care as to the kinds of food eaten, will bring about a cure slowly. If the feet become offensive, a little alum rubbed over them does no harm and stops the disagreeable odor.

Chattanooga, Tenn., October 15, 1905.

Dear Physical Director:

Being a reader of your fine paper, I would like to ask you a few questions. Age, 13 years; height, 4 feet 5 inches; wrist, 4¼ inches. (1) What kind of exercise must I take to develop my wrist? (2) How can I become strong? (3) Is bicycle riding good for me? Wishing you success and hoping to see this in print, I am,

Yours truly,

An Admirer.

(1) Use the horizontal bar, dumbbells, Indian clubs and wrestle. (2) Go in for physical training; it's the only way. (3) If you bend over the bars and scorch or ride long distance your heart action will be weakened thereby.



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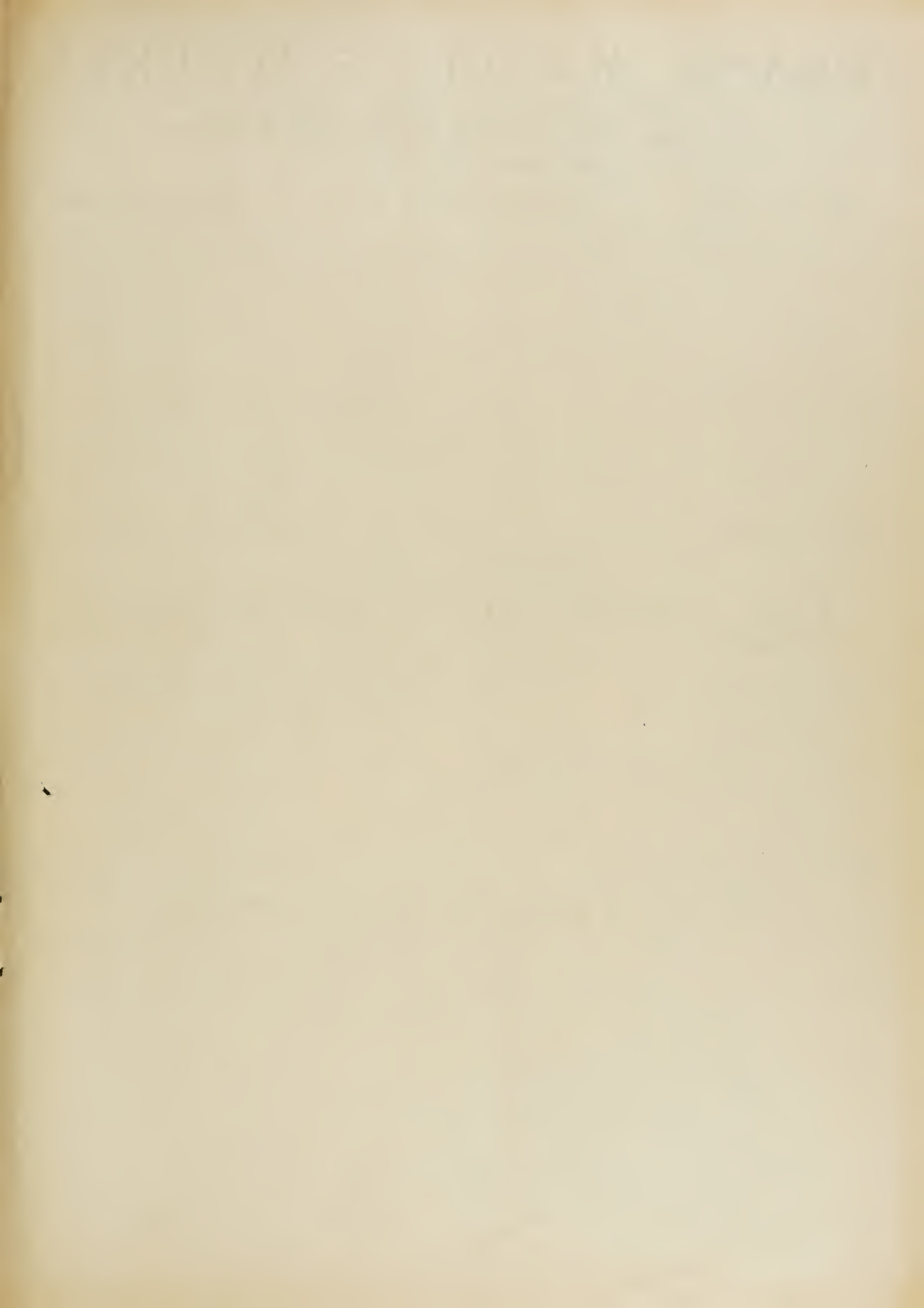
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.... " " FRANK MANLEY'S WEEKLY, Nos.....
.... " " WILD WEST WEEKLY, Nos.....
.... " " THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76, Nos.....
.... " " PLUCK AND LUCK, Nos.....
.... " " SECRET SERVICE, Nos.....
.... " " YOUNG ATHLETE'S WEEKLY, Nos.....
.... " " TEN CENT HANDBOOKS, Nos.....
Name.....Street and No.....Town.....State.....